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# NEHRU

## THE SPRING OF ETERNAL YOUTH

*By*  
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## CHAPTER I

### CHILDHOOD

Beauty, grace and talent are rare gifts. Seldom do we find them congregated in correct proportion in one sole person. At longer intervals than that of a generation we see them—see them showered on certain selected individuals as though by celestial influence. Those thus favoured go right ahead towards the object which they have set their minds on leaving all obstacles behind. There is no peace for them because they are full of the task with which they are entrusted. They seem to require no rest as their limbs, so to say, are endowed with a divine fervour which knows no fatigue. They do not drift as we do with the ever-changing direction of the wind, but clear a clean passage at the teeth of extreme opposition not only for themselves but also for them who follow in their wake. The road which they tread through to reach their pre-ordained destination is never shut against intrusion. It is not in the nature of a conditional gift enjoyable during someone's pleasure or to be used only by such and such. It remains open for all times ; and the entire humanity without discrimination has a right over it and can roam about at sweet will without the fear of a trespass. This is the kind of road that these human-angels make for their fellowmen and it is made of human justice and political wisdom.

As already said it is a rare gift—to have beauty, grace and talent in right combination—and in certain cases it may be called a divine gift. He who is the recipient of these sterling qualities is recognised by the great things he does for the common good. In every turn he takes and in every deed he performs there is a divine touch if we only care to see. We have seen and acknowledged it to some extent in the case of Jawaharlal Nehru. About his beauty of person there is no need to stress. It is common knowledge that he is young, strikingly handsome and quite healthy. Poet Tagore's

comparison of him to the spring of eternal youth completes the picture. As regards grace he has a good deal of it. His easy movements among all classes of people, from a real prince to a peasant, his soft-spoken speeches which goad millions into action, not blindly but understandingly, his graciousness in his attitude towards the world in spite of its seeming indifference to the long struggle in which he is engaged for the emancipation of India from foreign domination, and last but not less important his well-known temper whenever he feels like it—what do all these indicate if he is not grace personified? Speaking of temper, does it not plainly show one's honesty and sincerity and let me add a certain amount of divinity?

Beyond all this and permeating it—his talent. He has so rare a gift of talent and ability that the whole world knows it and he is also aware of it unlike other celebrities. The adventures of his talent began at home with his initiation into the mysteries of theosophy, no doubt it is a science of religion. Later he took up natural science at Cambridge and then studied for the bar—a form of legal science if it can be called so. As though his appetite for sciences had only been stimulated but not quenched he plunged into the vast sea of political science as soon as he returned to India. He is still in it. It is his talent that has made him the absolute master of India though not in its legal sense but politically. It is the same talent that is leading this country to the threshold of complete freedom. He has not lived half his life, yet the celebrity of his name extends most widely and he is held in the highest estimation by all who know or hear of him.

Truly admirable, indeed, and divinely endowed is Jawaharlal Nehru; this leader of men is the beloved and only son of Pandit Motilal Nehru whose death not long ago but at a crucial moment in the history of political India has removed from our midst a towering personality—a personality who by virtue of his wide knowledge and experience, his political acumen, his ardent patriotism and, above all, the supreme regard in which he was held by his countrymen, could have

been very substantially helpful in shaping things that were then to come. Almost a modern Hercules in his magnanimous daring and his fighting strength Pandit Motilal's immensity of sacrifice in the cause of Indian independence is beyond all comparison. He was in the arena of active politics only for a decade, and that too during the closing years of his life, and yet the weight he added to the national movement was tremendously great. It was not his physical labours alone that had instilled a new life into the movement but the reputation he had already gained in other walks of life had an indirect influence on his countrymen in assessing the value of his conversion. His was a triumphant march to the end. As is the father so is the son—the hero of our story who idolized his parent in his youth and imitated him, but now in the prime of his life he manifests his own spirit of independence and defies the world who opposes him.

In the history of the Nehrus it is written that they had come from Kashmir in the beginning of the eighteenth century. That they had descended from those dizzy heights of the Himalayas down the plains to Delhi by the special invitation of the last of the Mogul emperors is one version. That they—at least one of them, a good scholar, not of English literature but of Sanskrit and Persian—had come down to seek fame and fortune in the rich plains of Hindusthan and had managed to enlist the royal patronage is another. Invitation or no invitation, we see them settled down in Delhi and enjoying the royal favours for a century and a half, of course, not without the usual ups and downs. Then comes the interruption which terminates their connection with Delhi permanently. The famous mutiny of 1857, the fall of the Mogul empire, the flight for life of families from the imperial capital and along with them the Nehrus—all these happen simultaneously. The next scene is set in the city of the Tajmahal—the famous Agra where we witness the birth of Pandit Motilal Nehru on the 6th of May 1861, his education at home upto the age of twelve, then at Cawnpore and Allahabad, and finally we see him appear for the law examination and come out with a medal of distinction. He starts his legal practice at Cawnpore and later transfers to



Allahabad where his elder brother has already set up a lucrative practice in the newly established High Court. From now on Allahabad becomes the home of the Nehrus. Pandit Motilal Nehru as we know him is made there ; and there he makes the fortune which sends young Jawaharlal to England. After seven years of exile—that English life of his at that early age and the secluded life at home at an earlier stage explain his cure feeling of loneliness in his later life—the poor young thing of a rich regal father is permitted to return to his native land. How he returns ? Figuratively, with the soul of a saint in the garb of a scoundrel and these two dual personalities in him meet on a common platform—his temper. At last he lands at Bombay In that great cosmopolitan city which is said to be the rendezvous of the East and the West nobody recognises him ; or is it that he recognises no one ? Either the one or the other, or both, In England he is really a foreigner, it is an admitted fact ; but in India, in the land of his birth, to be treated similarly ? It is too much for a youngman, so he thinks And what does he do about it ? Nothing in particular. He simply sows the seed for this history and goes his way ; and that history is still going on writing.

Jawaharlal was born at Allahabad on 14th November 1889 in the house then occupied by his parents at Mirganj. It is peculiar that there is nothing on record to show whether it was on a windy morning or on a cloudless evening or it was on a night in the midst of thunder and lightning accompanied by a heavy downpour that this happy event took place. These things are not prophecies but mere facts. Though simple they are dear to us because they speak of our revered leader. Again with regard to prophecies. India is the land of seers and prophets. Their business is to predict. In spite of the numerous mistakes they are committing in their predictions they are not so far ruled out of our social structure. Why did they not foretell the advent of our hero ? If they were to plead that they were not aware of it why did they not tell when he had actually come what he was going to do to India and to the world ? Perhaps they were too shy to come out, or they lost their grip over

their sciences by the spread of western civilization. Let us count on our future historians to fill in what has been left out by oversight or otherwise.

However, the child seems to have created no more stir than any other infant except probably in the local Bar Association if there was one at the time. Those veterans of the law must have with their usual insight in other people's affairs visualized the child growing up to adopt his father's profession and making the court room his world. Little should they have guessed the amazing career that was in store for the child. Little could they have known what that birth heralded to the suffering, downtrodden humanity. To do them justice there was nothing in his surroundings to give promise of another than ordinary future of a solitary child in an ever-growing-rich household. But the blood in his veins, could it have spoken, might have revealed a different picture. It must be admitted that the logical deduction of the legal luminaries with regard to the child's future if they had ever given expression to it had partly come true. A score and three years after we find the child blossomed into a handsome youth with a freshly acquired English law degree in his pocket following his father who is enjoying a roaring practice at the bar to the court room. Only so far and no further. He soon grows out of it. Sooner enough he sets up his own practice. His court room extends to the length and breadth of India, his court compound covers the two known hemispheres, his clients are the comity of nations and the cause he advocates is the human right of freedom, Briefs.' His briefs are the world's riches without the right of their disposal until he comes of age which he has decided not to.

At the time of Jawaharlal's birth his father was in good circumstances. He was mounting higher and higher in his profession with an ever-increasing income. As though to give an outlet to the incoming-wealth so that he might not be accused of accumulating that rubbish heap he brought about a radical change in his art of living. He took to European style with all the paraphernalia attending to it. Not only he but, the entire family embraced it, including the baby-

son of whom it is said he was brought up like a prince—Indian or European? It sounds so commonplace to us to-day because most of us are so accustomed to it—I mean the introduction of the westernized ways of life in our homes—that it is difficult to realize how radical a departure it was during the closing period of the last century. The unexpected arrival of uncouth and uneducated Indian friends or relations with their bag and baggage for a few days' stay on an otherwise fine evening; and simultaneously with it the announcement of a return visit from H.E.'s Secretary, or H.M.'s Ambassador, or H.H. the Maharaja of Frontier Bellys. These days they would hug each other and exclaim how wonderful they met—the one in English of course, and the other in one of the numerous languages lost and forgotten, and between them with beaming pleasure the host would interpret. The point is we have learnt or rather it has become a fashion to admire and fondle anything that has a connection with the remote period of the past, the older the better, in a detached way. To have an illiterate friend or a relation is a valuable possession and one is proud of it as he would be if he owned a race horse or an elephant. It is but natural that he should show his precious property to his honoured guest and receive his unalloyed appreciation, and the other realizing what is demanded of him on the social scale readily reacts to it. Another innovation that has come into existence in our social make-up through past experience is the division of etiquette and the reservation of emergency provisions. One can get Indian *cha* or English tea and other facilities of a divergent nature at a short notice or without it in most of our homes without disturbing the routine. But we should remember that those days were not the same as these days. They couldn't boast of any previous experience, and for guidance they had none but their Pickwickian mistakes. What they did they did it to fulfil their hearts' desire. The scene was always one of comedy, tragedy, or an irksome combination of both in its mild form and many of them reaped the consequences in rich harvest without a wail, we should suppose. To control the situation thus created without injuring the black or white skin whichever was involved required the wit and humour of a brilliant lawyer, the diplomatic skill of an eminent statesman

and the keen alertness of a hard-boiled soldier thrown inadvertently between two opposing forces. Not one after the other, but the trio must conjointly and with full co-operation start the operation if an ignominious retreat were to be averted. That Pandit Motilal had come out successful in these social adjustments we have to presume in the absence of any report to the contrary which proves that he was a lawyer, a statesman and a soldier of the highest order. As long ago as 1919 before he had ever started his manifold activities Pandit Kapil Deva Malaviya writes in his booklet entitled *The Honourable Pandit Motilal Nehru* : "Pandit Motilal's dash and grit controlled by a sense of responsibility have won for him the place of honour in the congress circles of these provinces. And fittingly enough, the place of honour has been his, as of right, in every department of life. At the bar, he plays the first fiddle. In fashionable society, he is the boss who sets the fashion. In social reform, he goes ahead of any other person, and in politics, he is a recognised leader of considerable influence. His activities and tastes—hobbies included—have been so many sided and varied that amongst the educated men of the province he is perhaps the only full man." Yes, he was a full man in every respect ; and he was a great man too, because he had in him an exceedingly happy combination of a very well-poised proportion of all human qualities.

Jawaharlal's early childhood was an uneventful one by his own admission and that of some of his biographers, meaning that it was not marked by any dramatic events or heroic deeds and that it was an ordinary one as that of any other child under similar circumstances. What episodes and events did they expect is not clear unless it was that of his jumping into a well or thrusting his head into a running wheel for experimental purposes in which case he would have remained a child hero for ever. We have to be thankful that he did not possess the affectation to create such juvenile sensations. If he had been so minded he could have had ample opportunities in the house in which he was born and brought up in the midst of a large family of cousins and near relations, and later in the palatial bungalow into which the

family moved where he was virtually under the care of private tutors or governesses. As it was, there was bathing, walking and riding ; and there were stories from the *Arabian Nights* narrated by the Muslim munshi, and stories from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* told by his mother and aunt which kept him engaged and stimulated his imagination. The various social and religious ceremonies in which the women of the family indulged from time to time were to him a source of delight and enjoyment. There were again the great Hindu, Muslim and Kashmiri festivals for a free play of his enthusiasm, and excitement, the religious part of it excepted. Over and above these, there was one event he was personally and particularly interested in which he was the centre of attraction too, and that was his birthday celebration. He had a serious complaint against it coming only once a year.

Speaking of his early childhood in his autobiography, Jawaharlal says : "An only son of prosperous parents is apt to be spoilt, especially so in India. And when that son happens to have been an only child for the first eleven years of his existence there is little hope for him to escape this spoiling." He was not spoilt, not in the least. His statement is true in a general sort of way but it does not seem to apply in his own case. His spoiling would have been completed before he knew where he was drifting to if there had been a few companions of his own age. His father would not have reached the degree of prosperity when there was the only son with his playmates to implement his spending capacity. No occasion would have arisen for an English university education ; and even if there was a chance for it young Jawaharlal would have returned with or without a degree, probably with a latter, but surely with an anglicised girl whose genealogical table showed that her father was an American and her mother French, the latter being the only child of a Swiss father and a Norwegian mother, etc., thus proving her claim to have an Indian husband to complete her family romance. In that case most of us would not have heard of a Jawaharlal and those whose proximity to him could not help knowing him would have had a person with a different background, not, however, the same personality whom we are trying to make out.

In spite of his grievances that all his cousins were much older and his sisters were much younger than he was and that he had to spend his early years as a somewhat lonely child, and in spite of his grievances that he was not sent to school where at least he could have secured the companionship of other children we have his words "I was left a great deal to my own fancies and solitary games" of which alone we are concerned. It was his solitariness that had moulded his character to what he is and we want him to be so. On the face of it how can we give him a brother, or a sister, or a friend of his own age to play with? To resist him is difficult. Supposing we relented, would his choice fall upon a brother or a sister and change the course of his life? Certainly not. The lonely child Jawaharlal, more than two score years after, seated in Almora prison reveals his innermost thoughts while reviewing his jail life on the last page of his autobiography: "The years I have spent in prison! Sitting alone, wrapped in my thoughts, how many seasons I have seen go by, following each other into oblivion! How many moons I have watched wax and wane, and the pageant of the stars moving along inexorably and majestically! How many yesterdays of my youth lie buried here! And sometimes I see the ghosts of these dead yesterdays rise up, bringing poignant memories, and whispering to me: 'Was it worthwhile?' There is no hesitation about the answer. If I were given the chance to go through my life again, with my present knowledge and experience added, I would no doubt try to make many changes in my personal life; I would endeavour to improve in many ways on what I had previously done, but my major decisions in public affairs would remain untouched. Indeed, I could not vary them, for they were stronger than myself, and a force beyond my control drove me to them."

The life he had to go through with all its thorns was worthwhile. It is just like him. His policy in politics would remain intact if he were given another chance to revise it. That is why we adore him. But what was the reason for his unalterable decision in matters pertaining to politics? Not because of its rightness or righteousness but because he felt it was stronger, and it was a force beyond his control that

drove him to it. If he had only looked back for a moment he would have found that the same force which had controlled his major decisions had a hand in the minor details and any alteration on any part of it would have changed the face of the whole structure. The same could be applied to his personal life which he says a bit uncertainly that he would no doubt try to make many changes. If he were to be actually put to it he would have tried only to see that the slightest modification in his past life would bring out altogether a different product—not he as he is. But the beauty lies in the fact that he would not have tried it. His words were merely meant to emphasize his personal attitude towards politics which was uppermost in his mind at the time.

Going back to the earliest part of his life we find one trait in his character which would have been of no consequence if it had been noticed in any other child, but in him with the record of his subsequent life before us and the admiration and respect with which we look at him we cannot ignore or overlook however trifling it might appear to be on the surface of it because we are conscious that it might have had far-reaching consequences without our knowing it. He has not mentioned it in his autobiography probably because he was not aware of it as it had occurred before he acquired the power of remembering things nor has it found a place in most of his biographies except perhaps in one which states that 'as a child Jawaharlal was extremely fond of crying and when asked for the reason he would repeat the questioner's name whoever it was and cry still more loudly saying that he had beaten him without an atom of truth in it and thus with every new accoster he would find a newer accused and would not easily give up his hobby for noisy cries.' Was it because of his being an only and overfondled child? That is the question which always strikes us first and the answer is clear. When we observe a certain peculiarity of temperament or some kind of naughtiness in a child we at once dump him as an overfondled or spoilt child, if the family is in an affluent condition. We never look for the real reason. It might lay deeper anywhere. It might be the making or unmaking of the future man. It might be the rise or fall of

an empire. It might bring about a revolution or introduce a new civilisation. There are such tremendous possibilities and the basic cause and effect may be found in the veins of the weeping child, and his constant weeping or any other action out of the ordinary may be a foreshadowed sign of the coming event or a form of expression of how he feels about it, and yet we will philosophically put it: "We will see when it comes" and drop the matter altogether to be taken up later by a newer generation without sufficient material to go on with. That is where we are placed. We can speculate on it without reaching the end or rather the beginning. The question again arises why should the child weep? Why should he accuse a person who was known to be innocent? Why should he keep up this habit persistently during his very childhood? Was he neglected? Was he scolded? He was neither neglected nor scolded. Was he refused anything? No. Yet he weeps, Why? There must be something at the back of it. It might look silly, trivial, or significant. Still there must be a cause; and that cause might sometimes lead inevitable results of the greatest importance. Weeping or laughing without provocation shows abnormality. Both great men and silly people possess certain abnormal characteristics. They laugh without any physical reason being apparent to us. The former do it for a weighty reason and there is greatness behind it while the latter have only their silliness all around. We have to study the personalities and distinguish them before we can rightly interpret their actions. But it is actions that make personalities. They are thus interconnected. Therefore, we must examine a series of actions of individuals and put them under the different categories and then start reconciling them with their individual actions. The same may be applied in the case of children. Now coming to our child. Let us first of all consider which category he belongs to—great, silly or mediocre. His actions in general do not prove to show that he is silly. Then he must belong to the first or to the last. He cannot be mediocre with the abnormal tendency of weeping. The alternative is that he is great. If he is so, as we think he is, surely his action must bear a cause. As it is not visible to our physical eye we have to suppose that it is lying deeper. It is the work of a



Havelock Ellis plus a Swami Vivekananda to find out the root cause and explain the meaning, not only that of his weeping but also that of his accusation of innocent persons. If that riddle is solved it may probably be found that his crying without any apparent reason and his pointing out to the sympathetic questioner as his tormentor have a bearing on his later life and activities.

Before I close this chapter I shall relate one event, not of his selection but by accident, in which he was made a hero or at least he felt like one, and if there had been a Charles Dickens somewhere near the field young Jawaharlal would have immediately run into a book; even the great writer would not have felt himself competent to deal with his subject as he was only acquainted with the children of the slums and not that of the aristocracy. To quote Jawaharlal's own words; 'One little incident of those early days stands out in my memory. I must have been about seven or eight then. I used to go out every day for a ride accompanied by a sawar from a cavalry unit then stationed in Allahabad. One evening I had a fall and my pony—a pretty animal, partly Arab—returned home without me. Father was giving a tennis party. There was great consternation and all the members of the party, headed by father, formed a procession in all kinds of vehicles, and set out in search of me. They met me on the way and I was treated as if I had performed some heroic deed!'<sup>2</sup> Thus passed the early days of his childhood.

## CHAPTER II

### EDUCATION

Jawaharlal was ten when the family shifted to the new bungalow constructed at an enormous cost. It had a big, beautiful garden and a swimming pool to thrill his youthful imagination. It was called Anand Bhawan and this splendid house with its no less splendid grounds Pandit Motilal presented to the Indian National Congress in later years and it is now the headquarters of the congress. Young Jawaharlal had a good time over here and he enjoyed it in right royal fashion. He could wander all over the place without hind

rance from his elders—that was a new and a novel freedom for him—making discoveries all the while and his summer dips in the pool at odd hours many times a day gave him much secret satisfaction because it was a secret unto himself. Then there were his father's bathing parties, a most exhilarating sight, and its numbers most aptly could have belonged to the old Pickwick club. There were other parties too on a large and refined scale such as tea, dinner, garden, etc., which attracted the attendance of the notables. Their costumes, their arrivals and departures; the manner of their eating, talking and laughing—all these he watched with great delight and excitement. The most exciting thing he experienced at this time was the birth of his younger sister. Why should he not have brothers or sisters when all others seemed to have them? Here came the answer to his question. It thrilled and thrilled him and absorbed all his attention for the moment at least.

During these days "European governesses or private tutors were supposed to be in charge of my education" he says. From the word supposition we can form our own conclusions as to what amount of trouble they had taken over him. No use commenting because they are the world over like that. They only see that their wards do not perform any heroic deeds in their immediate presence lest they may be dragged into reputation overnight for which they will be required to pay very dearly sometimes. Jawaharlal admired his father. He was the embodiment of strength, courage and cleverness. Much as he admired and loved his parent he feared him to, Not so of his mother. He had no fear for her. He knew her excessive and indiscriminating love for him and he took the fullest advantage of the fact. He was now eleven. The care of his education was committed to a great many munshis, tutors and governesses, over the whole of whom Ferdinand T. Brooks, a theosophist and a man of austere temper, presided. He was recommended by Mrs. Besant and for three years he influenced his young charge in many ways. He developed in the boy a taste for reading. He read *The Jungle Books*, *Kim*, *Don Quixote*, *Farthest North*, the novels of Scott, Dickens and Thackeray,

H. G. Wells's romances, Mark Twain and Sherlock Holmes, *Prisoner of Zenda*, Jerome K. Jerome's *Three men in a Boat*, Du Maurier's *Trilby* and *Peter Ibbetson*. He liked poetry and read a good deal of it, the taste for which still survives. He with the initiative and active help of his tutor rigged up a little laboratory and conducted experiments in chemistry and physics. Though only for a short duration another powerful influence which was brought to bear upon him during Mr. Brook's regime was theosophy. There were theosophical meetings which he attended. Without understanding much he listened to the metaphysical arguments, and discussions about reincarnation and the astral and other supernatural bodies, and anras, and the doctrine of Karma. The whole thing fascinated him and the mystery of it intensified his curiosity. He felt that theosophy was the key to the secrets of the universe. For the first time he thought of religion and his respect for Hinduism grew. He dreamt of astral bodies and imagined himself flying vast distances. The dream seems to trouble him because he says: "This dream of flying high up in the air (without any appliance) has indeed been a frequent one throughout my life; and sometimes it has been vivid and realistic and the countryside seemed to lie underneath me in a vast panorama. I do not know how the modern interpreters of dreams, Freud and others, would interpret this dream." He wants an interpreter to explain his dream. He would have required an interpreter for his early weeping also if he had known it. The state of a child who is crying is identical with the state of a man who is dreaming. In the former case the faculties of the child are awake but not sufficiently developed to perform their function. In the latter the faculties are fully developed—they can think, understand and interpret—but they are asleep and without their help the man is powerless. In both instances an outsider must step in for interpretation with the requisite knowledge.

Mrs. Besant's visits to Allahabad and her oratorical speeches made a deep impression upon Jawaharlal's mind. He decided to join the Theosophical Society. He was only thirteen then. He approached his father for permission who

laughingly gave it because he had already tasted the fruit of spiritualism and had left it. The ceremony of initiation was performed by Mrs. Besant which consisted of good advice and instruction in some mysterious signs, "I was thrilled." That was all what mattered. He attended the Theosophical Convention at Benares "and saw old Colonel Colcott with his fine beard." He gradually acquired the insipid look which denotes piety and it was a fashion among men and women of the theosophical branch at the time. He also grew in his belief of being one of the elect. All these vanished into thin air when Brooks left without much regret.

Two important events of an international character intruded upon his senses—the Boer War and later the Russo-Japanese War. In the Boer War his sympathies were with the Boers and he got the news of their fighting from the newspapers. In the Russo Japanese War the Japanese victories stirred him deeply and he read a number of books on Japan. He liked the knightly tales of old Japan and the pleasant prose of Lafcadio Hearn particularly. He set to thinking. New ideas crept into his mind with the old recollections. He had gathered from the talks of his grown-up cousins the overbearing character and insulting manners of the English people towards Indians. He had resented it. He had also heard their considered opinion that it was the duty of every Indian to stand up to this and not to tolerate it. He had completely agreed there. Now the Japanese triumphs opened his eyes wider. They evoked vague desires at first which slowly took shape. It transformed the whole situation and the affect was electrifying. He was thinking of India's independence. He writes in the autobiography: "Nationalistic ideas filled my mind. I mused of Indian freedom and Asiatic freedom from the thralldom of Europe. I dreamt of brave deeds, of how, sword in hand, I would fight for India and help freeing her." Jawaharlal admired and appreciated Japan's spirited stand and fervently wished for her victory. She won that war and other wars as well and then turned her attention on China with a new vigour flushed by her older triumphs. Her ruthlessness and inhumanity in China were of such intensity and magnitude that to-day

Jawaharlal condemns Japan and what she stands for and would like to see the last of the Japs being driven out of the Chinese territory. He had wished and hoped for Russia's defeat in her combat with Japan but now Russia inspires him. Much in Soviet Russia he dislikes—the ruthless suppression, unnecessary violence, etc., in carrying out various policies. These two factors equally predominate in the capitalist world also. But in Russia they are aimed at a new order based on peace and co-operation and real freedom for the masses. The aim—that is the one fundamental thing that draws him to Russia and to socialism. It is not only Indian freedom and Asiatic freedom that he covets but a world freedom—a freedom from oppression and repression which stunt the growth of human personality. He is fighting for that freedom, not with sword in hand as he had seen it in his earlier dream, not even with the weapon of non-violence as some would like to put it—because those who pushed it on him had not been able to convince him fully of its fighting value—but unarmed against a world armed to the teeth. Is there any braver deed than that ?

He reached the age of fourteen and changes were taking place in him. Fresh thoughts and vague fancies were floating in his mind and he began to take more interest in the opposite sex. He thought it a little beneath his dignity to mix with girls but yet at parties where pretty faces were in abundance a glance or a touch used to thrill him.

It was in May 1903, while he was fifteen, that he set sail for England accompanied by his parents and his little sister. Pandit Motilal had been expectantly waiting for this happy event. He had planned and schemed with the full conviction that Great Britain—the land of the aristocracy and medieval feudalism with their centuries of old traditions before and behind them—alone could provide for his only son the standard of education which he had set in his mind as the proper ideal—an ideal which would satisfy most of his conditions. It must equip him with the newest intellectual demands and social developments. It must be a testimonial that would carry him like a whirlwind through any career he

might early take up. At one stroke it must raise him to the summit of power and it must make up for his (father's) deficiencies. The last word in ambition.

These were the days when only a few of the Indian aristocracy knew that there was a thing like sending their sons for higher studies to England or America. Among them there were only a few who could afford that luxury. Their main considerations were—the unknown distance, the unfamiliar transport, the inevitably long separation from their dear ones, the money not what was actually required but what would exaggeratedly be required, the risk whether they would ever come back or not, and the strangeness of life in a strange land among strangers. After weighing these points in all conceivable ways there would have been only a mere handful who would undertake the risk and responsibility of sending their sons or wards to a foreign land. And even in their cases the sons or wards would always be youngmen who had secured a degree or two from an Indian university. It was never a boy of fourteen or fifteen. It would have been unthinkable. If there had been any plan of the kind the neighbouring families would have called it suicidal and would have asked if they were intending to send their son to death which would have put an end to the actual execution of the plan.

The situation, however, was a bit different with Jawahar Lal. His father was intelligent and enterprising and he had moreover received the maximum education that his country could give him. He took up a profession—one of his own choice. Bent on success he worked for it. He succeeded—became a successful lawyer which brought him enough work and more money. He did not stop here which others would have done. He took his excursion trips to Britain and Europe as and when opportunities presented, saw what there was to see and enjoyed as much as he could and came back rich in knowledge but richer in experience. Now when he was taking his only son to England he knew exactly what he was doing. He had checked upon every thing. He had a precise idea where his son would be left

and what would happen to him. He had also foreseen the advantages as well as the disadvantages of such a project and had found it worthwhile. Hence his venture. It is rather superfluous for us to say because our words would be too inadequate to express their feelings, with what amount of pride and delight they must have started on their long journey and how it must have filled their minds to overflowing during the progress of their voyage and at last when they reached London what true joy and happiness and gratitude they must have felt in their hearts only to be filled in by the pangs of separation the next moment ! Are there any other two individuals in the world like one's father and mother to sacrifice all and receive nothing ? Jawaharlal ? He must have had his fill of thrills from start to finish,

Though slightly overaged Jawaharlal was fortunate to find a vacancy at Harrow. His parents went to the Continent to return later to India. This was the first time that he had been left alone among strangers. Naturally he felt lonely and homesick, not for a long time, however. Soon his energies and attention were absorbed in the life of the great school. He worked and took part in games and other amusements and gained the recognition that he was no shirker. He and the other boys in the school lived together, learnt together and played together and yet he had a feeling that he was not one of them and they also must have felt in the same way. It was nobody's fault. As far as we can see it might have had nothing to do with India being a subject nation and young Jawaharlal being an Indian. It is doubtful whether the English boys of or under fourteen had heard of India being mentioned in any connection whatsoever. The aloofness must have been due to Jawaharlal's retiring nature which he had acquired from home where he had spent his childhood as a solitary figure in a crowded house. Because he had not attended any schools in India he was ignorant of the ways of the boys—what interested them most and what did not. The subjects which interested him and the knowledge he possessed on each were those of an educated adult and he could not freely discuss these with the boys of his own age. Another handicap which

stood as a stumbling block was his capacity to spend his time independently without assistance or interference from others. If his loneliness had been unbearable he would have sought the other boys, devised ways and means to get them interested in his activities, or he would have shown some interest in their doings and in the shortest possible time they would have become very friendly. He did not do it because he was destined for something higher.

Though he was placed in a low form owing to his small knowledge of Latin he was soon pushed up higher. In many subjects, as in general knowledge, he excelled those in age, no doubt, because he read more books and newspapers than his fellowstudents and his interests were wider. He once wrote to his father that the English boys were, as a rule, dull and they lived and grew on their games, but he revised his opinion later. He was interested in politics even in those days. The Liberal victory in the general election of 1906 elated him. His another interest was the early development of aviation. He was so enthusiastic over it that he informed his father that he might soon be able to make week-end visits to India by air. By and by he began to like Harrow and with it grew a feeling that he must leave it because the university was attracting him. He writes of this time : "A prize I got for good work at school was one of G. M. Trevelyan's Garibaldi books. This fascinated me and soon I obtained the other two volumes of the series and studied the whole Garibaldi story in them carefully. Visions of similar deeds in India came before me, of a gallant fight for freedom, and in my mind India and Italy got strangely mixed together. Harrow seemed rather a small and restricted place for these ideas and I wanted to go to the wider sphere of the university. So I induced father to agree to this and left Harrow after only two years' stay, which was much less than the usual period." With tears in his eyes he left Harrow. He wondered years later whether those tears were genuine or he was provoked to it by Harrow song and tradition.

In October 1907, at the age of seventeen, Jawaharlal entered Trinity College, Cambridge with the usual elation



of an undergraduate. He had a good deal of freedom, compared to school, to do what he liked. He felt himself a grown-up. As though to celebrate these two new acquisitions he wandered about the lanes and by-lanes of Cambridge for a while with a "delighted to meet you" air. Three years he spent at Cambridge. Its calm, unruffled atmosphere of Trinity College must have been congenial to his nature. They were three pleasant years with some work and some play and many friends with whom he talked about books and literature and history and politics and economics. His intellectual horizon began widening. They discussed Nietzsche, Bernard Shaw's prefaces, Lowes Dickinson, then took up sex and morality and had free discussions referring to Ivan Block, Havelock Ellis, Kraft Ebbing or Otto Weininger. They were strongly attracted by sex but were shy.

He frequently visited the Majlis, a club for Indians in Cambridge, where they discussed political problems using the most extreme language. Most of them are judges, lawyers and civil service men but none of them have taken to politics. Jawaharlal never spoke in this assembly during his three years' connection. Perhaps his shyness and diffidence. In his college debating society, The Magpie and Stump, he adopted the same attitude and paid fines for not speaking. He had the rare opportunity of occasionally getting firsthand Indian political views when some of the leaders visited Cambridge. Among them were Bepin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai and Gopal Krishna Gokhale. With regard to his general attitude towards life at this time Jawaharlal writes ; "My general attitude to life at this time was a vague kind of cyrenaicism, partly natural to youth, partly the influence of Oscar Wilde and Walter Pater. It is easy and gratifying to give a long Greek name to the desire for a soft life and pleasant experience. But there was something more in it than that for I was not particularly attracted to a soft life. Not having the religious temper and disliking the repressions of religion, it was natural for me to seek some other standard. I was superficial and did not go deep down into anything. And so the æsthetic side of life appealed to me, and the idea of going through life

worthily, not indulging it in the vulgar way, but still making the most of it and living a full and many-sided life attracted me. I enjoyed life and I refused to see why I should consider it a thing of sin. At the same time risk and adventure fascinated me: I was always, like my father, a bit of a gambler, at first with money and then for higher stakes, with the bigger issues of life. Indian politics in 1907 and 1908 were in a state of upheaval and I wanted to play a brave part in them, and this was not likely to lead to a soft life. All these mixed and sometimes conflicting desires led to a medley in my mind. Vague and confused it was but I did not worry, for the time for any decision was yet far distant. Meanwhile, life was pleasant, both physically and intellectually, fresh horizons were ever coming into sight, there was so much to be done so much to be seen, so many fresh avenues to explore. And we would sit by the fireside in the long winter evenings and talk and discuss unhurriedly deep into the night till the dying fire drove us shivering to our beds. And sometimes, during our discussions our voices would lose their even tenor and would grow loud and excited heated argument. But it was all make-believe. We played with the problems of human life in a mock-serious way, for they had not become real problems for us yet, and we had not been caught in the coils of the world's affairs. It was the pre-war world of the early twentieth century. Soon this world was to die, yielding place to another full of death and destruction and anguish and heart-sickness for the world's youth. But the veil of the future hid this and we saw around us an assured and advancing order of things and this was pleasant for those who could afford it.

"I write of cyrenaicism and the like and of various ideas that influenced me then. But it would be wrong to imagine that I thought clearly on these subjects then or even that I thought it necessary to try to be clear and definite about them. They were just vague fancies that floated in my mind and in this process left their impress in a greater or less degree. I did not worry myself at all about these speculations. Work and games and amuse-

ments filled my life and the only thing that disturbed me sometimes was the political struggle in India.....”

Throughout his stay in England Jawaharlal closely followed the happenings in India with deep interest. At Harrow he used to read English papers from which he got only meagre accounts ; but even that little showed that big events were taking place at home. The deportation of Lajpat Rai, the partition of Bengal, Tilak's activities, the swadeshi and boycott—all these stirred him tremendously. But the pity of it was that there was no one on the spot to whom he could talk about it with the result that the stirring news which he devoured so voraciously had to die away in his sleep without creating any sensation. At Cambridge it was different—different in the sense that he had certain facilities here which were lacking at Harrow public school. He was in a position to get Indian papers which contained detailed news and there were many with whom he could exchange views on current topics he was interested. It was while he was here that he read the news of Tilak's conviction and that of Aravindo Ghose which excited and infuriated not only him but the entire Indian student community in England. Another thing which he watched with deep concern was the way the masses of Bengal were taking the swadeshi and boycott pledge. They were the days when he used to wait for the arrival of home papers with tense expectation. It so happened that he read an article contributed by his father which was moderate in tone though sensible. The working of Jawaharlal's mind was such that he did not like it. He wrote to his father ironically that the British Government might be very much pleased with his views. This made the father wild and he thought of recalling Jawaharlal from England and its confounded environments. But second thoughts always cool down. He cooled down and the son continued his pursuits. Jawaharlal had one consolation that his father had been drawn into active politics even though the party he represented was not to his liking. He had joined the Moderates for the simple reason that he knew them and many of them were his colleagues in his profession. He presided over a provincial

conference in U.P. taking up strong view against the extremist tide which derived its momentum from the support of the younger generation. He became president of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee and was present at Surat when the Congress broke up in disorder to emerge later as a moderate group. When he was referred to by an English guest as being moderate in everything except his generosity the son had a different notion about his father learnt from long experience. He was never moderate in anything except his politics. A man of strong feelings strong passions, tremendous pride and great strength of will, he was nowhere near moderation, and yet he cast his lot with the Moderates and felt bitter against the Extremists whose leader Tilak he continued to admire. Jawaharlal wondered why this was so and how it came about. He explains : "Why was this so ? It was natural for him with his grounding in law and constitutionalism to take a lawyer's and a constitutional view of politics. His clear thinking led him to see that hard and extreme words lead nowhere unless they are followed by action appropriate to the language. He saw no effective action in prospect. The swadesh and boycott movements did not seem to him to carry matters far. And then the background of these movements was a religious nationalism which was alien to his nature. He did not look back to a revival in India of ancient times. He had no sympathy or understanding of them and utterly disliked many old social customs, caste and the like, which he considered reactionary. He looked to the West and felt greatly attracted by Western progress, and thought that this could come through an association with England."

It was Jawaharlal's last year at Cambridge. Naturally the question of his future career cropped up. The ever bright and glamorous Indian Civil Service was speculated on for a while. But there were difficulties. His sojourn in England would have to be extended by three to four years because he had not come up to the minimum prescribed age-limit one thing. Secondly, when he joined the service in India he would be shifted from place to place which his father and mother would not have. That idea was dropped and he

pitched on the bar being the paternal profession. With regard to his attitude towards the I. C. S. in spite of his extremist view he writes : "It is curious that in spite of my growing extremism in politics, I did not then view with my strong disfavour the idea of joining the I. C. S. and thus becoming a cog in the British Government's administrative machine in India. Such an idea in later years would have been repellent to me." If he had joined the civil service by any chance there is always the possibility that he would have fulfilled the highest expectations of the British Government. For them he would have been the most promising youngman in every respect they had had for some time. After a twenty-five years' glorious and meritorious service to his country and to the British Commonwealth he would be by now on the retiring list. He, in a career loaded with honours according to the British point of view, would have been long ago raised to the peerage to be pointed out as the youngest peer as he was actually pointed out as "the youngest president of the Indian National Congress" and at the present moment he would be holding a small job to help get through this warfare between Hitler and Churchill—the governorship of a province—with a clear prospect of being bodily shifted to the India Office in London as its permanent head to glorify the achievements of the British rule in India on the one hand and to re-establish the same with the Indian machinery.

Do you say if he had bolted away at the very outset before they could catch him in their grip ? First of all where would he go ? They would only stand and smile at his cleverness and would allow him as many rounds as he could possibly make, and then—no catching or gripping as you seem to think—simply pick him up. You know the British. They have a long hand and more, it is elastic. They need not bend or even take a step. Just stretch the hand. You and I and whomsoever they want to honour go and sit on it. We do not feel as if any pressure being exerted. What we feel is a feeling of comfort and personal security. Do you suggest that their hand is too hot ? No. It is never too hot or too cold. It is air-tight and air-conditioned. Only there is no way out of it. Does it matter ? You are in a safe hand and

nicely treated. What more do you want? Oh! You want to know what for they keep you? Simply for this, You have to take down their dictation correctly as a steno and act up to it. If you do it your fortune is made. It is for every Indian to choose and thus make his fortune. Where will India be? Well, you are asking too much. Any other question? Why did young Jawaharlal not join the British club? He was not made in that way. He did not see or understand individual as such but a whole nation. The nation must work and secure a national fortune and it must be divided among the individuals constituting the nation. Where was the harm for the British to accept his terms if it meant fortune to the nation which was the same as individual fortune? There was not much of a harm. But the British did not come in anywhere in his national programme except as a big audience. They were not required to wave their hand and prevent the nation from going to the devils—to Germany, Japan, Italy, Russia, etc. Why were they wanting to take so much trouble. They were always out for any amount of trouble. Just a matter of habit with them. They never noticed if they were welcome or not nor did they care if anybody noticed it. The presence of a tree or a lake or a mountain on any part of the globe no one would think of questioning. The same with a Britisher. The difference lay in the fact that a tree would not go out of its way to fetch people from the neighbourhood nor a lake nor a mountain but a Britisher would. He would extend his hand and the intended victim would fall into it without any manifestation of worries. The influence and magnetism would be of that magnitude. And in the art of handling other men and their affairs we would find him an expert. You must have seen how delicately he handles Roosevelt, Stalin, Chiang Kai-Shek and others without their knowing what is happening to them and how nicely he handles India and her millions. Unlike Roosevelt, etc., the Indians know it pretty well. Sorry we cannot go deeper. The time and the space—precious these days and the implications—precarious. Simple make out the point that if the British could have had a hold on young Jawaharlal he would not have remained a heavy or long problem. The expert hand of the artist by a twist would have moulded him into a genuine British article

to keep in line with their traditional status. Thank God he was saved for us at the nick of the moment, not by anybody's cleverness or far-sightedness but by a mere Indian way of thinking on the part of Pandit Motilal and Mrs. Nehru who wanted him near them. They did a good turn to the country and the country is deeply grateful to them. But look at the irony of fate ! It is doubtful if they had had him in the house even for as long as he would have been available if he had joined the I.C.S. He spent a full length of government service in British jails coming out only when he was allowed casual or privilege leave. He is in there still and it is not known when he is entitled to have another short term out.

Let me now explain briefly the reason why I led you out of the main subject. It is in the words of Jawaharlal, if you remember suggesting that though he did not then view with any strong disfavour the idea of joining the I.C.S. the same idea in later years would have been repellent to him. My point is that there is no knowing what would have happened to him or what he would have thought of it in his later life under a different set of circumstances. It might have been repellent to him or it might not. For the former we have his assurance and to further strengthen it we have his life he has led and he is still leading before us which leaves no room to doubt. But the latter—we are only concerned with it. Supposing there was no objection from any quarter and he entered the I.C.S. The training in England that he would have been put into immediately after would not be one giving the essentials for starting a revolutionary movement or encouraging it but one for the riddance of it wherever and whenever it was found. The word 'revolutionary' would bear a different meaning. He would be told that they are the worst enemies of the popularly constituted social structure and that they are ever a menace to the peace and progress of the country. Believe it or not he would have to swallow. There would not be time to ponder over it. Other things in the same strain would be coming in quick succession. If he wanted to avoid getting suffocated he would be required to digest them one by one as they came which he would do in the then prevailing atmosphere. As regards politics before

his own interpretation on the subject could materialize he would be handed over one with a background full of facts and figures. The British knew that this process would work all right ; and they were not taking any chances because there the British medicine was ready for cases of indigestion. In a record time young Jawaharlal would realise the fact that his body politic was so accustomed to British diet that any other would only injure his system. Thereafter things would be easy both for the trained and the trainee. He would be initiated into the secrets of success of the British rule in India and would be explained that though he was not born he was British by profession and that he should always see things through British eyes especially where things Indian were concerned. A confidence and trust. How could any one think of betraying ?

Let us further suppose that young Jawaharlal after having been thoroughly grounded in the British tradition was sent back to India and had taken over charge. Before proceeding with our fictitious narration we have to see a bit of truth handed down to us in which British influence has taken no part. Here is one version of Jawaharlal's life in England : ".....he responded to the atmosphere of his English surroundings and imbibed the many sterling qualities of the British race. When he returned after seven years in Europe he was a full-fledged product of western culture. Active nationalism was as far removed from his thoughts as he was out of harmony with the true atmosphere of his own country....." Here is another by an Englishman who was a fellow-student of Jawaharlal at Cambridge : '.....Nehru, scion of a house of progressive views, had already, when he entered Harrow, shaken off the shackles of oriental modes of religious and social thought.....More than once he declared his affection for England and acknowledged his debt to the education she gave him.....' Now we will see Jawaharlal's own confession more than two decades after : "I came across some old Harrow friends and developed expensive habits in their company. Often I exceeded the handsome allowance that father made me and he was greatly worried on my account, fearing that I was rapidly



going to the devil. But as a matter of fact I was not doing anything so notable. I was merely trying to ape to some extent the prosperous but somewhat empty-headed Englishman who is called a 'man about town.' This soft and pointless existence, needless to say, did not improve me in any way. My early enthusiasms began to be toned down and the only thing that seemed to go up was my conceit.' Empty headed Englishman, eh? Did he realise it then? To ape an empty-headed man how empty-headed one has to be. Does prosperity go only with empty-headedness? Or does it mean that prosperous people beget only empty-headed sons? Are there not 'men about town' in India and elsewhere? What does he mean by his soft and pointless existence? What else is expected of a student sent to England but to study and pass his exam? Is there no point in attending law classes? Soft life? What is hard life? Should a boy be made to sleep under the bed or should he be kept in starvation and under observation? Numerous questions of this kind can be asked with answers implied pointing to one thing that there was nothing in Jawaharlal's early life for regret or remonstrance. It was a blameless and clean life as is the case of every youngster. At all ages in human life there are common and certain special fancies and tendencies. Fulfilled or not we go through them. Without them we are not what we are. My contention is whatever Jawaharlal did uptill yesterday was done on purpose—to give us Jawaharlal of to-day.

Now reverting a little. Without the least influence from the British as a race or as a government young Jawaharlal became a finished product of western civilization by the time he completed his English University education. As somebody said, not however in connection with him, he thought British, felt British, applauded all things British, and acted British and succeeded in it admirably well up to a certain point in his life when he gave it up of his own accord. What he had of India then were his name, not reputation, a home and a few people and some hazy ideas of nationalism most of which, strictly speaking, he must have picked up during his law course when he would have more time to spend and less work to

do and in addition he must have calculated and acted upon the independence that would be his on becoming a barrister. It is immaterial where he got the ideas from because, as they were, they were not strong enough to withstand worldly temptations and they could have been altered beyond recognition by careful manipulation which the I. C. S. Department would have accomplished. When he turned into English so readily by his own inclinations or through disinterested environments and when he felt no grievances against Englishmen in their individual capacity how easily he would have reacted to the British handling during his civil service coaching. He would not have been able to see his father's entry into active politics which was one of the main factors for his unflinching resolve to run amok in the political world if he had decided to become 'a clog in the British Government's administrative machine' as he put it. It is very unlikely that a father who had got his son admitted in the government service would have considered it advisable to join a campaign against the same government. A son would have done it but not a father. If he had returned as an I. C. S. man many of the facilities which had helped to fan his burning fire of politics would not have existed. He would be surrounded with officials and people holding pro-British sentiments and he would have had no chance of studying the political situation first-hand and even if he had his outlook would be such at the time that he would look at it from a different angle. Over and above these, supposing he was brought face to face with a case in which an Englishman was insulted or assaulted by an unorthodox section of the Indian community. How natural it is for him to recollect his own early life among Englishmen and his utter helplessness in the matter of self-defence if anything had happened to him! How reasonable it is to think that an Englishman in India constitutes only a drop in the ocean and that it is the main duty and moral responsibility of the government to safeguard his interests—his honour, life and property! In this way, if young Jawaharlal had only chosen he would have come into prominence in another sphere and we would have lost our saviour!

Jawaharlal took his degree at Cambridge in 1910 with second class honours in natural science and left for London to join the Temple Bar. For the next two years his life was easy-going as his law studies did not take up much time. He simply drifted, doing some general reading, vaguely attracted to the Fabians and socialistic ideas, and interested in the political movements of the day. During his vacations he twice visited India and sometimes travelled on the continent. On one such occasion he had a narrow escape in Norway where he had gone on a pleasure cruise soon after taking his degree at Cambridge in the company of some friends. Tramping across the mountainous country they reached their small hotel, hot and weary, and demanded bath. They could as well have demanded for the moon because both was an unknown thing in that civilization. However, they were directed to have their wash in a neighbouring stream. Jawaharlal accompanied by an English youth went to the roaring torrent which was coming from a glacier nearby. He entered the water which was freezing though not deep and the bottom was terribly slippery. He slipped and fell and the ice-cold water numbed him and made him lose all sensation or power of controlling his limbs. He could not regain his foothold with the result that he was swept rapidly along by the torrent. His companion, however, managed to get out and ran along the side and ultimately, succeeding in catching Jawaharlal's leg, dragged him out. Two or three hundred yards ahead of them the torrent tumbled over an enormous precipice forming a water fall. The danger they were in they realized later. Though there was no heroism for him our hero was saved for us.

He got through the Bar examinations one after the other with neither glory nor ignominy and he was called to the Bar in the summer of 1912 and in the autumn of the same year after spending seven years in England he returned to India for good.

### CHAPTER III RETURN HOME

Jawaharlal was glad to be back home and to pick up old threads. His early months were pleasant but soon a kind

of monotony overtook him and he began to feel as though he was being engulfed in a dull routine of a pointless and futile existence. The habits and the ideas that had grown in him in England did not fit in with things in India as he found them. Fortunately his home atmosphere was fairly congenial and that was some help, but he was not satisfied. He joined the High Court and the work interested him to some extent. He spent his leisure in the Bar Library and in the club. The same people were found in both and they discussed the same old topics—law. There was not even amusement or diversion to his taste. He disliked his surroundings for want of intellectual stimulation.

He took to *shikar* for a while but had no special aptitude or inclination for it. He liked the outings and the jungle and cared little for the killing. His reputation was a singularly bloodless one except for an incident with an antelope which damped even the little ardour he possessed for *shikar*. He writes: "This harmless little animal fell down at my feet, wounded to death, and looked up at me with its great big eyes full of tears. Those eyes have often haunted me since."

The India of 1912 was not, politically, very active. The Extremists had been made to lie low without any effective leadership because Tilak was in gaol. Bengal was quiet after the partition muddle. The Moderates had been brought round to have a fresh and finishing look at the Minto-Morley scheme and admire the charms. The little interest that anybody had was focussed on Indians over the seas in South Africa. The Congress was a moderate assembly of men and women whose sole business was to pass some feeble resolutions and carry them home for safe keeping until the next anniversary.

Jawaharlal attended the Bankipore Congress of 1912 as a delegate. He writes what he saw there: "It was very much an English-knowing upper class affair where morning coats and well-pressed trousers were greatly in evidence. Essentially it was a social gathering with no political excitement or tension. Gokhale, fresh from South Africa, attended

it and was the outstanding person of the session. High-strung, full of earnestness and a nervous energy, he seemed to be one of the few persons present who took politics and public affairs seriously and felt deeply about them. I was impressed by him."

He experienced a feeling of dissatisfaction with life in the early years after his coming back from England. Though he handled a few cases his interest in his profession was indifferent because his heart was not in it. Politics, which to him meant aggressive nationalist activity against foreign rule, offered no scope for it. He joined the Congress, attended its meetings and whenever occasions demanded, liked them. Against the Fiji indenture system for Indian workers, or the South African Indian question, he put his heart and soul and worked hard, but then they were only temporary engagements. For some time he was attracted to the Servants of India Society without any idea of joining it, partly because of its moderation and partly due to his unwillingness to give up his profession. All the same he admired the members and their mission while it lasted.

Then came the all-absorbing hubub of the Great War. Politics was thrust into the background and the country was taken possession of by the Defence of India Act for the moment. There were conspiracies and shootings and press gang methods to enrol recruits in the Punjab. With the release of Tilak from prison the political India came again to life. Mrs. Besant and Tilak started the Home Rule Leagues. Jawaharlal joined both but worked for the former. Jawaharlal describes the political atmosphere then existed after a period of lull: "Mrs. Besant began to play an ever-increasing part in the Indian political scene. The annual sessions of the Congress became a little more exciting and the Moslem League began to march with the Congress. The atmosphere became electric and most of us youngmen felt exhilarated and expected big things in the near future. Mrs. Besant's internment added greatly to the excitement of the intelligentsia and vitalised the Home Rule movement all over the country. The Home Rule Leagues were attracting not

•only all the old Extremists who had been kept out of the Congress since 1907 but large numbers of new comers from the middle classes. They did not touch the masses ”

At about this time the Government of India conceived a plan to organise an Indian defence force on the lines of the European defence forces. But the Indian unit was treated differently from the European forces in several ways and various humiliating discriminations were imposed on the former which many of the Indian leaders resented. However, they decided to co-operate in the U. P. and accordingly a committee was formed in Allahabad to push the scheme on. Jawaharlal sent in his application to join the new force but the disturbing news of Mrs. Besant's internment irritated him so much that he prevailed upon the members—his father was one—of the committee to cancel the meeting and all other work in connection with the defence force.

Pandit Motilal, who had hitherto taken a moderate position in politics, was deeply moved by the internment of Mrs. Besant. His nature rebelled against the excessive suppression by the government and he felt his moderation giving way under the pressure of events. He joined the Home Rule League and later became the president of the Allahabad branch. Jawaharlal's political and public activities at this time were modest. He kept off from addressing public gatherings. His diffidence had not left him. He was reluctant to speak in English because the audience might not be able to follow and he was unwilling to speak in Hindustani as he had only a limited stock of it. He was prevailed upon to deliver his first public speech at Allahabad in 1915 and was rewarded in public. He writes : “ The occasion was a protest meeting against a new Act muzzling the press. I spoke briefly and in English. As soon as the meeting was over Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru, to my great embarrassment, embraced and kissed me in public on the dais. This was not because of what I had said or how I had said it. His effusive joy was caused by the mere fact that I had spoken in public and thus a new recruit had been

obtained for public work, for this work consisted in those days practically of speaking only."

It was after the Lucknow Congress that he was visibly moved by a number of eloquent speeches delivered by Sarojini Naidu in Allahabad. It was all pure nationalism and patriotism. His vague socialist ideas of college days vanished. He became a convert for the time being. He met Gandhiji for the first time at the Lucknow Congress in 1916, in the full flush of his South African experiences. Jawaharlal writes about this meeting : "My first meeting with Gandhiji was about the time of the Lucknow Congress during Christmas 1916. All of us admired him for his heroic fight in South Africa, but he seemed very distant and different and unpolitical to many of us youngmen. He refused to take part in Congress or national politics then and confined himself to the South African Indian question. Soon afterwards his adventures and victory in Champaran, on behalf of the tenants of the planters, filled us with enthusiasm. We saw that he was prepared to apply his methods in India also and they promised success."

Jawaharlal was married to Miss Kamala Koul at Delhi in February 1916 according to the old Hindu rites. The celebration was a great event being the only son of his father. It should be called a love marriage because they had met each other at Mussoorie previous to the wedding and given their mutual consent. It was a happy union in the truest sense of the term. There were differences but they melted before they were detected. She joined the national struggle in spite of her bad health and suffered to her utmost simply because her husband was in it. It is perhaps true that he could not give her the time and attention he should have given. But then it was not his fault. She understood it. They both are great. The greatness has to pay. They paid with their life.

In August 1934 Jawaharlal was suddenly released on parole from Dehra Dun Gaol to enable him to pay a brief visit to Kamala Nehru whose condition was rapidly deterio-

rating. He writes in his autobiography what he felt seeing her on her sickbed : "There she lay frail and utterly weak, a shadow of herself, struggling feebly with her illness, and the thought that she might leave me became an intolerable obsession. It was eighteen and a half years since our marriage, and my mind wandered back to that day and to all that these succeeding years had brought us. I was twenty-six at the time and she was about seventeen, a slip of a girl, utterly unsophisticated in the ways of the world. The difference in our ages was considerable, but greater still was the difference in our mental outlook, for, I was far more grown-up than she was. And yet with all my appearance of worldly wisdom I was very boyish, and I hardly realised that this delicate, sensitive girl's mind was slowly unfolding like a flower and required gentle and careful tending. We were attracted to each other and got on well enough, but our backgrounds were different and there was a want of adjustment. These maladjustments would sometimes lead to friction and there were many petty quarrels over trivialities, boy-and-girl affairs which did not last long and ended in a quick reconciliation. Each had a quick temper, a sensitive nature, and a childish notion of keeping one's dignity. In spite of this our attachment grew, though the want of adjustment lessened only slowly. Twenty-one months after our marriage, Indira, our daughter and only child, arrived.

"Our marriage had almost coincided with new developments in politics, and my absorption in them grew. They were the Home Rule days, and soon after came Martial Law in the Punjab and Non-co-operation, and more and more I was involved in the dust and tumble of public affairs. So great became my concentration in these activities that, all unconsciously, I almost overlooked her and left her to her own resources, just when she required my full co-operation. My affection for her continued and even grew and it was a great comfort to know that she was there to help me with her soothing influence. She gave me strength, but she must have suffered and felt a little neglected. An unkindness



to her would almost have been better than this semi-forgetful, casual attitude.

"And then came her recurring illness and my long absences in prison, when we could only meet at gaol interviews. The Civil Disobedience movement brought her in the front rank of our fighters, and she rejoiced when she too went to prison. We grew even nearer to each other. Our rare meetings became precious, and we looked forward to them and counted the days that intervened. We could not get tired of each other or stale, for there was always a freshness and novelty about our meetings and brief periods together. Each of us was continually making fresh discoveries in the other, though sometimes perhaps the new discoveries were not to our liking. Even our grown-up disagreements had something boyish and girlish about them.

"After eighteen years of married life she had still retained her girlish and virginal appearance; there was nothing matronly about her. Almost she might have been the bride that came to our house so long ago. But I had changed vastly, and though I was fit and supple and active enough for my age—and, I was told, I still possessed some boyish traits—my looks betrayed me. I was partly bald and my hair was grey, lines and furrows crossed my face and dark shadows surrounded my eyes. The last four years with their troubles and worries had left many a mark on me. Often, in these later years when Kamala and I had gone out together in a strange place, she was mistaken, to my embarrassment, for my daughter. She and Indira looked like two sisters.

"Eighteen years of my married life! But how many long years out of them had I spent in prison-cell, and Kamala in hospital's and sanatoria? And now again I was serving a prison sentence and out just for a few days, and she was lying ill, struggling for life. I felt a little irritated at her for her carelessness about her health. And yet how could I blame her, for her eager spirit fretted at her inaction and her inability to take her full share in the national struggle. Physically unable to do so, she could neither take to work

properly nor to treatment, and the fire inside her wore down the body.

“ Surely she was not going to leave me now when I needed her most ? Why, we had just begun really to know and understand each other ; our joint life was only now properly beginning. We relied so much on each other, we had so much to do together,

“ So I thought as I watched her from day to day and hour to hour,”

Kamala Nehru's condition slightly improved and Jawaharlal was rearrested and taken to prison in eleven days after his release.

## CHAPTER IV

### ENTRY INTO POLITICS

When the World War ended India was in the grip of a suppressed excitement. There were great expectations but not without fears and anxieties. The middle classes waited eagerly for the new constitutional changes which would open many fresh avenues for the betterment of their lot. The industrialists did not have to wait even because the new policy of industrialization was before them. They, encouraged and backed by the Government, floated new industries and grew in wealth and power which made them bold and vehement in their demands for more power and more wealth. The Government was not in a receptive mood to listen to their proposals and so they turned to politics. Then there was the British pledge made during the war announcing that the object of British policy in India was not only the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration, but also the granting of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible Government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. This historic declaration had been welcomed by the Congress “ with deep and general satisfaction ” and by other political bodies “ with great relief and delight ”, particularly so because the announcement was accompanied by the with-

drawal of repressive measures against the Home Rule movement and the release of Mrs. Besant. It is but natural that this friendly gesture on the part of the British should have aroused immense hopes among the ignorant but imaginative population. Then again there were the Moslems who were in a tense and angry mood at the treatment meted out to Turkey and the Khilafat question. They were agitating hoping for results.

This was the atmosphere that was then prevailing in India—a bit tense and expectant which never bespoke ease. As though to ease the situation and to clear their position the Government came on the scene armed with two Bills which empowered them to arrest and intern without any legal formalities. To an India preparing to take up the reins of self-government they gave a severe shock. Indians of all shades of opinion opposed the measures with all their might and the Government, in a spirit of rivalry and competition as it would seem passed the laws in the teeth of unanimous public opinion, thus inviting a trouble with the Saint of the Sabarmati Ashram.

Mahatma Gandhi was convalescing from a serious illness when he heard the news of the oncoming wave of Indian freedom—a specimen only in the form of Rowlatt Act. He did not take to it. He said as much in his application to the Viceroy who ignored it or sent it to the popular basket, there is no specific record of which. Perhaps there was no mention of previous experience or the true copies of testimonials were not duly attached. There was something wrong somewhere. The saint's waiting brought no acknowledgment and no response—that is what we have to presume because nobody says anything about a reply having been sent—which irritated him considerably, quite natural in the circumstances. "Who is the Viceroy? The servant of the people Who am I? The leader of the people, A world of difference. And yet—." This might have been the line of thoughts that must have passed through his sensitive mind, for he recovered from his illness sooner than ever and sent an urgent call to his disciples—Mahatmajis was not quite a saint

at that time as he has come to be known later and we never knew his game then, and therefore we will call them followers or admirers—to confer upon the crisis that had been created by the blissful ignorance of the Viceroy. Ignorance is bliss, sometimes it is so and in this case particularly so because the Viceroy did not have to watch the shadows of coming events. When they came bodily he met them squarely.

The followers, true to their calling, came and assembled before their lord and saint. The saint spoke. "Do not obey these pernicious, degrading, humiliating laws; do not submit, if you want to retain your self-respect and integrity as human beings." A good advice, indeed, but it sounds more like an order. I wonder how the saint got these adjectives so handy which seem to possess a superlative character, each one of them. However, he spoke and let us hear his voice. One writer puts it: "His voice was the voice of an orach [the speaker and the writer must be knowing better]. These measured words [yes, they must have been measured before they were uttered, not only the length and breadth but depth or height also], spoken in a soft low voice [saintliness], but a voice that had the strength and earnestness titanic will behind it [pelmanism], wormed their way into the innermost hearts [rather, thrown into the background] of his people [through British Indian newspapers]. India had never heard such a voice before [each has his own voice and none could have thought of copying the saint's patent which is plainly illegal]. The saint then started the Satyagraha Sabha whose object was to disobey the Rowlatt Act adhering all the time to truth and non-violence.

Jawaharlal was passing through a strain of inaction—fretting, waiting and watching for something to happen. To him the news of the Satyagraha was one of tremendous relief. He writes: "Here at last was a way out of the tangle, a method of action which was straight and open and possibly effective. I was afire with enthusiasm and wanted to join the Satyagraha Sabha immediately. I hardly thought of the consequences—law-breaking, gaol-going, etc.—and if I

thought of them I did not care. But suddenly my ardour was damped and I realised that all was not plain sailing." Another thing that weighed him down was his father's attitude towards the new movement. He was so accustomed to look into the cause and effect of every step he took in any direction that this new idea of Satyagraha could not stand his scrutiny. He disliked it. What good would the gaol-going of a number of individuals do? What pressure could it bring on the government? That was how he thought. And there was another consideration, though personal, it was overwhelming to a father that his only son, brought up in ease and luxury, should be allowed to suffer the rigours of a prison-cell—the idea was most repulsive, it was preposterous. Here was a serious problem for the father and son affecting their very existence. In the midst of a high tension between them and a mental conflict of the highest order they tried hard to be as considerate to each other as possible. But that would not ease the situation or lessen the suffering. For a time they seemed to be drifting apart and even the possibility of such a thing was oppressive and tragic. Jawaharlal writes; "Both of us had a distressing time, and night after night I wandered about alone, tortured in mind and trying to grope my way out. Father—I discovered later—actually tried sleeping on the floor to find out what it was like, as he thought that this would be my lot in prison."

The situation, however, was brought under control by the timely intervention of Mahatma Gandhi. He came to Allahabad at the invitation of Pandit Motilal and they had long discussions at the end of which Mahatma advised Jawaharlal not to precipitate matters by jumping into hot water and assured him (aside) he would be provided with boiling water very soon. Jawaharlal was not quite happy at the way by which he was taken out of his present dilemma, but he lived happily on his future prospects; and they came sooner than expected fulfilling every letter and word of the Mahatma.

The day of all-India hartal on 30th March 1919 fixed by Mahatma Gandhi as a protest against the Black Acts—com-

plete suspension of business all over India—united Hindu-Muslim demonstration at Delhi—clash with government forces—furious rioting and bloodshed. In the Punjab—groaning under the oppression of the war drain in money and men—the observance of the hartal with more than usual solemnity—especially Amritsar looking practically deserted—a mammoth meeting of 35,000 towards evening—vow of Satyagraha taken by all.

Then came the day of *Ramanavami*, on April 10—a day which would be remembered by India for generations to come—the darkest day in the history of the British rule in India—a day of suffering and humiliation. On that day in the city of Amritsar a procession was taken out in which the Muslims joined in large numbers. The Hindu-Muslim unity! It was too much for Sir Michael O'Dwyer. Two leaders of the procession were arrested on a charge of sedition and sentenced them to deportation. The news spread in the town and people in thousands joined the procession which then turned towards the magistrate's bungalow in order to petition for the release of the leaders. Their progress was, however, checked by the police who calling upon the processionists to disperse opened fire killing some on the spot. This infuriated the mob which looted and burnt down several banks and demolished many government buildings killing a number of Europeans in retaliation. The disturbances were so widespread throughout the Punjab that the martial law was declared by the government.

Vengeance is sweet. It was on April 13. A meeting to protest against the repressive measures was to take place at five in the evening in Jallianwallah Bagh at Amritsar—an enclosed place with only one narrow entrance. Being also a religious festival day thousands had come from the suburbs. They met at the appointed hour and they were trapped. General Dyer and his men arrived, blocked the only exit and without warning ordered fire. The people ran hither and thither in pell mell. Those who attempted to scale the wall were shot down first and those who tried the entrance got it next. The fire was always pointed to the place where the crowd was the thickest. The dead were gone, the wounded

were left to die and the others were left wounded. It was a veritable massacre.

The Punjab was cut off from the rest of India. No news was allowed to go out and neither men and those who were out were not permitted to enter. Jawaharlal and some others wanted to go openly to the affected areas and defy the martial law regulations but they were kept back. Meanwhile an organisation was set up on behalf of the Congress for relief and enquiry. The enquiry part was entrusted to Pandit Motilal and Deshbandhu Das, with Mahatma Gandhi taking a great deal of interest in it. Jawaharlal was deputed to accompany Deshbandhu Das to Amritsar. He gained much valuable experience from it and his admiration for the Bengal leader increased. He also saw a great deal of Mahatma Gandhi during the enquiry and was struck by the Mahatma's political insight.

The Punjab events changed Pandit Motilal's political outlook. He was moving gradually and imperceptibly away from his moderate position. He presided over the Amritsar Congress in 1919 the first Gandhi Congress—and issued a moving appeal to the Liberal leaders to come to the rescue of the people stricken with martial law tyranny. But the Liberal leaders had their eyes rivetted on the coming new constitutional reforms. Hence they refused to join the historic session of the Congress. It hurt Pandit Motilal and he broke off from the Liberals.

During 1920 the political and Khilafat movements developed side by side, both proceeding in the same direction. With the adoption by the Congress of Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent non-cooperation they joined hands. The first of August was fixed for the commencement of the campaign although the Congress had not considered or accepted the proposal. On that day Lokamanya Tilak died in Bombay. Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal arrived in time to join the mighty demonstration of Bombay's millions to pay homage to their departed leader.

Jawaharlal's mind was full of political developments in the beginning of 1920 and of the coming of the non-cooper-

ation. He knew that there was poverty and misery among the peasants but about the real conditions he was ignorant. The chance for studying the situation first-hand he got without his seeking for it and it was to play an important part in later years. He was in Mussoorie with his ailing mother and sick wife. In the same hotel where they were putting up were the members of the Afghan delegation. He was not interested in them nor were they in him but the Government was interested in both. One fine evening he was served with an externment order asking to leave the district of Dehra Dun in twenty-four hours which virtually meant that he should leave the hotel immediately. He protested but the government would not listen and he ultimately left. The order was, however, rescinded a little later.

He spent about two weeks in Allahabad and he got entangled in the *kisan*-peasant-movement. An army of two hundred of them marched fifty miles from the interior and reached Allahabad. Their object was to draw the attention of the prominent leaders to their pitiable plight and seek their help and counsel. Jawaharlal met them promptly and they told him their tales of woe begging him to accompany them and see things with his own eyes. They would accept no denial and therefore the inevitable happened. He went with some colleagues and spent three days in the villages far from railway, far from road and far from civilization.

What did he see? Not starvation and death, not disease and destitution. Was he duped by the army of peasants? It was a revelation to him and so is it for us. Let us hear his own words.

"That visit was a revelation to me," he writes. "We found the whole countryside afire with enthusiasm and full of a strange excitement. Enormous gatherings would take place at the briefest notice by word of mouth. One village would communicate with another, and the second with the third, and soon, and presently the whole villages would empty out, and all over the fields there would be men, women and children on the march to the meeting-place. Or, more swiftly still, the cry of *Sita Ram*—*Sita Ra-a-a-m*—would



fill the air, and travel far in all directions and be echoed back from other villages, and then people would come, streaming out or even running as fast as they could. They were in miserable rags, men and women [did they know or feel it?], but their faces were full of excitement and their eyes glistened and seemed to expect strange happenings which would, as if by a miracle, put an end to their long misery." This was what he found in the villages, enthusiasm and excitement, we should add, at first sight; and this was the welcome, a right royal welcome he was greeted with throughout. Where was their poverty? Where was their misery? They were all forgotten. They knew only the coming of the visitor, to them the illustrious visitor—their hero who would bring health, happiness and prosperity and other things they need, and what was required of them was to give him a grand reception. They were quite happy in their belief. Happiness is not of body but of mind. In their new-found happiness they forgot their half-starved bodies covered in miserable rags. His advent filled them with new hopes and they were expectantly waiting for the good news he had to impart. But at the back of it all there was poverty and misery staring stark at their faces.

The first enthusiasm of meeting over, Jawaharlal had a closer look. He writes what he felt then. "Looking at them and their misery and overflowing gratitude, I was filled with shame and sorrow, shame at my own easy-going and comfortable life and our petty politics of the city which ignored this vast multitude of semi-naked sons and daughters of India, sorrow at the degradation and overwhelming poverty of India. A new picture of India seemed to rise before me, naked, starving, crushed, and utterly miserable. And their faith in us, casual visitors from the distant city, embarrassed me and filled me with a new responsibility that frightened me." Ever thereafter this picture of the desolate peasantry was before him; and he realized more than ever that nationalism meant nothing unless the problem of bread was solved.

He returned from the villages but again went. He wandered about a great deal from village to village, feeding with the peasants, living with them in their mud huts, talking

to them for long hours, and often addressing meetings, big and small. The art of public speaking he learnt from the peasants. They took away the shyness from him. Till then he was frightened at the prospect, especially if the speaking was to be done in Hindustani. But he could not possibly avoid addressing these peasant gatherings, and how could he be shy of these poor unsophisticated people? He spoke to them, man to man, and told them what he had in his heart. Whether the gathering consisted of a few persons or of thousands he adopted the same conversational style and he was fluent enough. He became deeply interested in peasant problems which changed his entire political outlook.

Then it was the all-absorbing subject of non-co-operation. In the autumn of 1920 a special session of the Congress met at Calcutta under the presidentship of Lala Lajpat Rai for the adoption of Mahatma Gandhi's non-co-operation programme. Though Pandit Motilal and Deshbandhu Das then opposed it they rallied round at the Nagpur Congress three months later. Thus began the Gandhi era in Congress politics. Jawaharlal joined the movement with full of enthusiasm and optimism. He says: "The non-co-operation movement offered me what I wanted—the goal of national freedom and (as I thought) the ending of the exploitation of the under-dog, and the means which satisfied my moral sense and gave me a sense of personal freedom. So great was this personal satisfaction that even a possibility of failure did not count for much, for such failure could only be temporary." He admired the creed of non-violence. Situated as India was, no other choice was possible for her. He, however, did not like the religious colouring that was given to it. Yet the unique personality of the author of the movement stood before his vision. "Gandhiji's calm deep-eyes," he writes, "would hold me and probe gently into the depths; his voice, clear and limpid, would put its way into the heart and evoke an emotional response." He yielded to the magic spell.

The next three months—from the time of Calcutta Congress to that of Nagpur—witnessed the advancing tide of non-co-operation all over the country. The appeal for a

boycott of the elections to the new legislatures was remarkably successful. Jawaharlal and his colleagues, who worked for the Congress programme, worked hard, harder than they had ever done before, for they knew that the conflict with the government would come soon, and they wanted to do as much as possible before they were removed. "Above all," writes Jawaharlal, "we had a sense of freedom and a pride in that freedom. The old feeling of oppression and frustration was completely gone. There was no more whispering, no round-about legal phraseology to avoid getting into trouble with the authorities. We said what we felt and shouted it out from the house-tops. What did we care for the consequences? Prison? We looked forward to it; that would help our cause still further. The innumerable spies and secret-service men who used to surround us and follow us about became rather pitiable individuals as there was nothing secret for them to discover. All our cards were always on the table."

They derived not only a feeling of satisfaction at doing effective political work which was changing the face of India before their very eyes, but also an agreeable sense of moral superiority over their opponents, both in regard to goal and methods. Every day the morale of the nationalists went up and that of the government went down. It seemed to the government that the old world they knew in India was toppling down. There was a new aggressive spirit and self-reliance and fearlessness which was only strengthened by repression in a small way. The nerves of British officials began to give way.

## CHAPTER V

### FIRST IMPRISONMENT

Nineteen twenty-one was an extraordinary year in many respects. There was a strange mixture of nationalism and politics and religion and mysticism and fanaticism. For the time being they were all pulled together. It was *Hindu-Mussalman ki Jai* in the air. Mahatma Gandhi became "a symbolic expression of the confused desires of the people." Jawaharlal became wholly absorbed in the movement. He

gave up all his other associations and contacts, old friends, books, except in so far as they dealt with the work in hand. He almost forgot his family, his wife, his daughter. He lived in offices and committee meetings and crowds. He with his associates trudged many a mile across fields and visited distant villages and addressed peasant meetings.

By mixing with the crowd he experienced the thrill of mass-feeling, the power of influencing the mass. He began to understand them a little. He felt at home with them with all the dust and discomfort. He explains how they took to each other : "I took to the crowd and the crowd took to me, and yet I never lost myself in it ; always I felt apart from it. From my separate mental perch I looked at it critically, and I never ceased to wonder how I, who was so different in every way from those thousands who surrounded me, different in habits, in desires in mental and spiritual outlook, how I had managed to gain goodwill and a measure of confidence from these people. Was it because they took me for something other than I was ? Would they bear with me when they knew me better ? Was I gaining their goodwill under false pretences ? I tried to be frank and straightforward to them ; I even spoke harshly to them sometimes and criticised many of their pet beliefs and customs, but still they put up with me. And yet I could not get rid of the idea that their affection was meant not for me as I was, but for some fanciful image of me that they had formed. How long could that false image endure ? And why should it be allowed to endure ? And when it fell down and they saw the reality, what then ? "

Right through the year 1921 individual Congress workers were being arrested and sentenced, but there were no mass arrests. In December the Prince of Wales was sent to India for motives unknown. The Congress proclaimed a boycott of all the functions in connection with the visit of the Prince. Thereupon the Congress Volunteers were declared an illegal organisation. Pandit Motilal and Jawaharlal took the lead in U. P. and they were arrested. The father

was accused of being a member of an illegal organisation. The son's offence was the distribution of notices of hartal in connection with the boycott. They both were sentenced to six months' imprisonment. About his arrest Jawaharlal writes humorously ;

"I was sitting rather late one day in the Congress office at Allahabad trying to clear up arrears of work. An excited clerk told me that the police had come with a search warrant and were surrounding the office building. I was also, of course, a little excited, for it was my first experience of the kind, but the desire to show off was strong, the wish to appear perfectly cool and collected, unaffected by the comings and goings of the police. So I asked a clerk to accompany the police officer in his search round the office room, and insisted on the rest of the staff carrying on their usual work and ignoring the police. A little later, a friend and colleague, who had been arrested just outside the office, came to me accompanied by a policeman to bid me goodbye. I was so full of the conceit that I must treat these novel occurrences as every-day happenings that I treated my colleague in a most unfeeling manner. Casually I asked him and the policeman to wait till I finished the letter I had been writing. Soon news came of other arrests in the city, I decided at last to go home and see what was happening there. I found the inevitable police searching part of the large house and learnt that they had come to arrest both father and me."

However, Jawaharlal did not serve his full term. Some three months after his arrest and conviction it was found out that he was wrongly sentenced. He was discharged forthwith. This was his first visit to a British jail but not the last. When he came out the civil resistance had already been suspended by Mahatma Gandhi on account of the Chauri Chaura incident. Jawaharlal immediately went to see him at Ahmedabad but before he reached there the Mahatma had been arrested and the interview took place at Sabarmati prison. He attended the historic trial. It was a strange scene. The presiding judge, who was an English-

man, admired Mahatma Gandhi as a great man but found it his unpleasant duty to treat him as a rebel. Mahatma Gandhi, appreciating the judge's predicament, pleaded guilty and begged for a heavy sentence. He was awarded six years' imprisonment. Referring to the trial Jawaharlal writes : " It was a memorable occasion, and those of us who were present are not likely ever to forget it. The judge, an Englishman, behaved with dignity and feeling. Gandhiji's statement to the court was a most moving one, and we came away, emotionally stirred, and with the impress of his vivid phrases and striking images in our mind."

Jawaharlal returned to Allahabad with a heavy heart. He was unhappy and lonely out of prison because friends and colleagues were in. He interested himself in the boycott of foreign cloth and the picketting of erring shops. He was again arrested and sentenced to one year and nine months. The charges were criminal intimidation, extortion, sedition and some other offences, though the sedition charge was not proceeded with. This was his second sentence. After about six weeks of freedom he found himself within the prisonbars—Lucknow District Gaol. He was released after nine months on 31st January 1923.

In his absence and in the absence of Mahatma Gandhi the Congress politics had deteriorated. In the place of ideals there were intrigues, and various cliques were trying to capture the Congress machinery by the usual tactics. Pandit Motilal had come out after serving out his sentence. The Congress were in two camps—No-changers and Pro-changers. Pro changers led by Pandit Motilal and Deshbandhu Das who later formed the Swaraj Party wanted to make council entry a part of the Congress policy for the avowed purpose of fighting the bureaucracy from within. With this view they had moved a resolution of council entry in 1922 session of the Congress held at Gaya but it had been defeated. Deshbandhu Das had resigned which created a flutter in the Congress main camp. A meeting of the A. I. C. C. had been fixed for February 27 to bring about a compromise. It was at this time that Jawaharlal came out of jail. He was not a supporter of council entry.

He relates what he saw looking around him : " I found many changes that I had not so far noticed, new ideas, new conflicts, and instead of light I saw a growing confusion. My faith in Gandhiji's leadership remained, but I began to examine some parts of his programme more critically. But he was in prison and beyond our reach, and his advice could not be taken. Neither of the two Congress parties then functioning—the council party and the No-changers—attracted me. The former was obviously veering towards reformism and constitutionalism, and these seemed to me to lead to a blind alley. The No-changers were supposed to be the ardent followers of the Mahatma, but like most disciples of the great, they prized the letter of the teaching more than the spirit. There was nothing dynamic about them, and in practice most of them were inoffensive and pious social reformers. But they had one advantage. They kept in touch with the peasant masses, while the Swarajists in the councils were wholly occupied with parliamentary tactics."

Deshbandhu Das tried to convert him to the Swarajist creed. He did not succumb to it. His father, 'an ardent Swarajist at the time, did not press him in the matter. However, he with some others succeeded in bringing about a temporary reconciliation between the two rival groups in the Congress. But he was fed up with the pro-change and no-change politics. What he wanted was political action—a wave of direction of the same kind which had failed—in which he must throw his full weight. The surrounding atmosphere said 'nothing of the sort.' He was secretary of the U. P. Provincial Congress Committee and devoted his time and energy to the work of Congress organisation. He found that there was much to be done after the shake-up of the previous year. He worked hard, but mentally he was at a loose end, and therefore he thought that his work was of no use. Soon he got a certain amount of relief in his mental affliction. A new field of activity was opened for him within a few weeks of his release. He was, as it were, thrust into the presidency of the Allahabad Municipality. Even thirty minutes before the election no one had thought of him in this connection, but

at the last moment it was found by the Congress that he was the only suitable person in the group. That was a year when Congress leaders throughout India became presidents of municipalities and mayors of corporations. So he took up the municipal work. He puts down his impression : "Municipal work in all its varied forms began to interest me, and I gave more and more time to it. Some of its problems fascinated me. I studied the subject and developed ambitious notions of municipal reform. I was to find out later that there is little room for ambition or startling development in Indian municipalities as they are constituted to-day. Still, there was room for work and a cleaning and speeding-up of the machine, and I worked hard enough at it. Just then my Congress work was growing, and in addition to the provincial secretaryship I was made the All-India Secretary also. These various jobs often made me work fifteen hours a day, and the end of the day found me thoroughly exhausted." If he worked fifteen hours on an average and got exhausted, not at the end of the day but in the middle of the night, and went home to find solace in a short nap, it was his own fault. Nobody asked him for it. He was setting a bad example in a world full of bad examples. Had he realised the nuisance that he would be committing among the staff by his working overtime without adequate remuneration? It is plain when he worked they would be expected to stay on and that too without any extra income. If he told them to leave that would amount to an obligation. Why should the poor fellows after a day's hard labour for a pittance be subjected to extra-ordinary obligations? There are bosses who attend office punctually to check the attendance of others and go off for adventure-hunting and come back in the evening and settle down; and there are bosses whose morning is evening, and who arrive at the time of dispersal and go strong ever afterwards. They do not understand the trouble they are causing to their subordinates by their waywardness. Jawaharlal's fifteen-hour-day programme he used to keep up whenever he had the freedom to himself. One could wonder if it is not



for this habit of his that the government is taking him somewhere for some time.

During this period when everything was bleak and dreary, everybody looked for a lion for his share in economics and in politics, and each wanted his prosperity and his neighbour's adversity, Jawaharlal could find no place to step in without being touched as he was then of an orthodox kind. He stepped into his house and there he found compensation and consolation, and solace and happiness. But it was not all roses without a thorn. He was pricked by his financial dependency on his father. He had already given up his legal practice at the Mahatma's command and he had no steady income of his own. Their style of living had become simpler and his personal expenses were not great and yet—Once he spoke to his father gently and indirectly who pointed out what a fool he (son) would be to waste his time for a month to earn a little money which he (father) would give away as *bakshis*. He assured his son that he (father) could earn in a day or two what he (son) would require for a year and asked the latter to get on with his public work.

On the strength of his presidentship of the preceding Gaya Congress Deshbandhu Das was the ex-officio Chairman of the All-India Congress Committee for 1923. The majority in this Committee was against him and the policy he advocated. At a meeting of the A. I. C. C. in Bombay in May 1923 matters came to a crisis. Deshbandhu Das resigned from the chairmanship. A new Working Committee was formed at the instance of a centre group in which Dr. Ansari became the President and Jawaharlal, the acting General Secretary. They started functioning to get into trouble. They ordered but there was no one to carry out. Another meeting of the A. I. C. C. was called in the same year, this time at Nagpur. The functionaries of the new party were questioned as to whom they represented. To their utter amazement they found that they represented none, not even themselves. At once they, not dissolved, but melted down. The Congress van again began moving,

now towards Delhi for a special session, reaching there in September Maulana Azad was in the chair. Maulana Mohammad Ali was present. He seemed to have received a telepathic communication from the Mahatma supporting the Council entry. He moved the resolution and it was carried. But Pandit Motilal and Deshbandhu Das were carried away sooner. They were next seen in the election campaign.

The scene shifts to a native state called Nabha. Jawaharlal was at Delhi attending the Congress session. His secretaryship of the new party had come to an end. He was enjoying the relief derived by it. But he was not without his thrills and shocks. This time it was a shock—to see how openly some of the prominent Congressmen intrigued and how cunningly party manoeuvres were conducted. Again, he was called 'cold blooded' by Deshbandhu Das. He had for years tried to be that but he had never realised that he had succeeded until this moment when—. All these were superficial to him—a few of the side-issues in politics. He wanted something real—animation, action, adventure. He was waiting for somebody to start it. If no one came forward he was in a mood to take the initiative on his own responsibility. The opportunity arrived. It reached him in the form of an invitation. He gladly accepted it. What was it about? A tournament or a wedding? Neither. It was a beating—beating of human beings. More animating than witnessing a tournament or marrying a girl, however. By road and by rail Jawaharlal went. Not alone. He took two shareholders of the new enterprise with him to collect the heavy dividend that had accrued. The incidents? It was all about a Sikh religious ceremony being stopped. In a country where devil worship is going on uninterrupted why should anyone stop a Sikh religious ceremony meant exclusively for God? Who would be the interested party to do such a thing if not the devil himself? It would seem that Nabha had run amok for a period. The first apparent symptoms were observed at a religious ceremony in Jaito. The Sikhs thought that it was only a temporary derangement and would come round to normality very

soon. To feel the tempo as well as to continue the interrupted ceremony they began sending batches of men to Jaito. Every time they were beaten and taken away to some jungles leaving them there to look into the consequences received in full. This was going on for some time.

It was to see one of these happenings that Jawaharlal and two friends were going. They arrived in time because one batch was proceeding to the place where the inhuman scene was said to have been taking place. On reaching Jaito the batch of men was stopped and Jawaharlal and his companions were served with orders that they should not enter Nabha territory. Jawaharlal pleaded that they were mere spectators and protested that they could not vanish into thin air as the orders seemed to indicate. However, they were promptly arrested and taken away, without giving them a chance of witnessing what they had come for, and the batch of men was dealt with as usual.

Jawaharlal and his colleagues were kept in the lock-up the whole day and towards evening they were handcuffed together and were marched to the station. At first they felt angry and later when the novelty of the situation dawned upon them they experienced the enjoyment of it. After a tedious journey in the train and a still more tedious handcuff on the wrist they entered the Nabha Gaol where they remained for two or three days until they were taken to court. The case dragged on from day to day and they were being tried for breach of the order not to enter Nabha for which the maximum sentence was six months. But the case took a dramatic turn and they were tried for conspiracy. There were only three, three were not enough, a fourth was unearthed from the fields through which Jawaharlal seemed to have walked. In the course of the trial Jawaharlal was asked if he would apologise but he replied that it was for the opposite party to do it.

At last the trials ended and Jawaharlal and friends got six months for breach of order and two years for conspiracy. The magistrate was afraid of the police, the police were afraid of the authorities and they were afraid

of Jawaharlal, so the things went on. That very evening of their sentences they were called and told by the Superintendent of the gaol that their sentences were suspended and they were asked to leave Nabha once for all and not to return. Thus terminated Jawaharlal's adventures among devils which gave him an insight into the corrupt practices in the state administration. He returned with typhus germs and had an attack of typhoid. It was never known what happened to the fourth conspiracy man whether he was detained or *inamed* away for his services. However, it became known later that Nabha had since recovered. That is a consolation, anyhow.

In December 1923 the annual session of the Congress was held at Co-conada and Maulana Mohammad Ali was the president who induced Jawaharlal to take up the All-India Congress secretaryship during the term of his presidentship. They had a bond of mutual affection and appreciation and so they got into the office and got on well together during the year. Early in 1924 came the news of Mahatma Gandhi's serious illness in prison and his removal to hospital for operation. Pandit Motilal and Jawaharlal visited him there. When the crisis passed the Mahatma was discharged the rest of his sentence having been remitted. He went to Juhu and there Jawaharlal and family met him. Pandit Motilal wanted to explain to him the Swarajist position, and to gain at least his passive co-operation, if not his active sympathy. However, the talks did not succeed in winning the Mahatma. Jawaharlal also returned from this trip a little disappointed, for the Mahatma was not helpful in clearing his doubts,

A meeting of the All-India Congress Committee was held at Ahmedabad in the middle of 1924. There was a sharp conflict between Mahatma Gandhi and the Swarajists over the question of changing the franchise and the rules for membership. Formerly, every one who paid four annas could become a member but now the Mahatma wanted to restrict the membership and insisted upon a certain quantity of self-spun yarn instead of money. The resolution was passed, Pandit Motilal and Deshbandhu Das marched out

in disapproval, the Mahatma was affected emotionally and the resolution was withdrawn. Ultimately, the Mahatma felt himself drawn towards his opponents, blessed the Swarajist work in the legislatures from a distance. During this time Pandit Motilal was in the Assembly creating tremendous uproar. Not only did he make his presence felt in the Assembly chamber but in the whole of India, probably in 10, Downing Street too. Undoubtedly he was most fitted to it—his legal and constitutional training, his remarkable powers of debate and his sarcasm stood in good stead. He kept his party spell-bound and harassed the government spokesmen constantly. He inflicted defeat after defeat on the government until it became paralysed by the strain. But soon he had to face difficulties with his own people. There were some undesirable elements who weakened the party. The government placed some temptations in the way and they ran away with them. They became ministers and executive councillors and with the knowledge that they had gained of party politics they were in a competent position to deal with their old comrades most effectively.

Mahatma Gandhi presided over the Congress session held at Belgaum in December 1924. Again Jawaharlal was elected to the secretaryship of the All-India Congress Committee for the ensuing year. In the summer of 1925 Pandit Motilal fell ill and the whole family went to Dalhousie and Jawaharlal joined them later. It was while they were here that they got the astounding news—the death of Deshbandhu Das. Pandit Motilal was bowed down with grief for a long time. It was a cruel blow to him. They returned to Allahabad immediately and then proceeded to Calcutta.

Jawaharlal was still carrying on with an ever-increasing reluctance. He had made some improvements as much as the existing circumstances would permit, but he was fed up with the government machinery and the machinery that was available in the municipality. He wanted to get rid of the responsibility, but all the members of the Board pressed him to stick on. In 1925, at the end of his second year, he finally resigned. A little later his wife fell seriously

ill and she lay for many months in a hospital at Lucknow. That year the Congress session was held at Cawnpore. Therefore with his distracted mind he had to keep running between Cawnpore, Lucknow and Allahabad. He heard with great relief the medical version that further treatment for his wife should be given in Switzerland. He writes : "I welcomed the idea, for I wanted an excuse to go out of India myself. My mind was befogged, and no clear path was visible ; and I thought that, perhaps, if I was far from India I could see things in better perspective and lighten up the dark corners of my mind." In March 1926 he sailed with his wife and his daughter for Venice.

## CHAPTER VI VISIT TO EUROPE.

Jawaharlal was going back to Europe thirteen years after. Thirteen years—a long time in a human life and not a short time in the life of a nation. During the period many changes could take place beyond all recognition. Jawaharlal was not the same Jawaharlal of old. He had been a part of India before but now he had become India. His personality, his patriotism, his desires and his aspirations were not his—they linked together with the political India and they belonged to India. However he tried he would not be able to extricate himself from the intricate network of Indian politics, so engrossed was he, Europe also had gone through tremendous changes during these thirteen years. It was not the same Europe that he had seen before. The war and the revolution had submerged it and a new Europe had come up with whose problems linked closely the problems of India. It was at Geneva in Switzerland that they pitched their tent for the first few months and when Kamala Nehru's health sufficiently improved they started on an extensive tour over the Continent visiting France, Germany, Holland, Belgium, England, Russia, etc. During his travel he came across some Indian political exiles and old revolutionaries and met many well-known political workers of European countries. He had also the rare opportunity of attending the Congress of Oppressed

Nationalities held at Brussels in February 1927 on behalf of the Indian National Congress. It was the first of its kind and was organised with the object of fighting against and uprooting imperialistic tendencies all over the world.

There were present at Brussels representatives from, the national organisations of Java, Indo-China, Palestine, Syria, Egypt, Arabs from North Africa and African Negroes. Then there were many left-wing Labour organisations and several European Labour leaders. Communists attended and took part in the proceedings, not as Communists, but as representatives of trade union or other organisations. The League against Imperialism, that was the name of the permanent organisation, had the support of many distinguished persons: George Lansbury, Madame Sun Yat Sen, Romain Rolland, Einstein. Jawaharlal participated in the deliberations of the League which helped him to know more intimately some of the problems of Colonial and dependent countries, and also the problems of the western Labour world. The personal experience he had had of the methods of the British Labour Party filled him with so much distaste that he turned to Communism with goodwill and inner satisfaction. He says: "So I turned inevitably with good will towards Communism, for, whatever its faults it was at least not hypocritical and not imperialistic. It was not a doctrinal adherence, as I did not know much about the fine points of Communism, my acquaintance being limited at the time to its broad features. These attracted me, as also the tremendous changes taking place in Russia. But Communists often irritated me by their dictatorial ways, their aggressive and rather vulgar methods, their habit of denouncing everybody who did not agree with them. This reaction was no doubt due, as they would say, to my own *bourgeois* education and upbringing." Because of a certain similarity in their outlook with that of his he invariably found himself siding with the Anglo-American members in an argument. Besides being a member of the subjects committee he presided over one of the sessions of the Brussels Congress. He was also one of the five elected presidents of the General Council of the League. He was offered

the secretaryship but he refused to accept it owing to the practical difficulties. He, however, kept in touch with the organisation for some years. In 1931, because of the part he played in the Delhi truce between the Congress and the Government of India he was expelled without hearing his own story.

From Brussels they continued their tour and reached Moscow in November 1927 to attend the tenth anniversary celebrations of the Soviet. The visit was a brief one on account of the ensuing Madras Congress during Christmas, but it was an important one because it enabled them to have a glimpse of the great Soviet experiment which provided them a background for their reading. They sailed for Colombo early in December from Marseilles.

Jawaharlal was coming back with fresh ideas, new hopes. His outlook had widened, and mere nationalism seemed to him a narrow and insufficient creed. Political and independence were no doubt essential, but they were steps only in the right direction. The development of the country and of the individual required social freedom and a socialistic structure of society and the state. Despite certain unpleasant aspects Soviet Russia attracted him greatly, and "seemed to hold forth a message of hope to the world." To train and prepare the country for these world events seemed to be the immediate task. Political independence should be the only possible political goal and Dominion status. Then there was the social goal. He felt that the Congress was not a sufficiently competent body to do much in this direction. Outside the Congress, among the youth and in labour circles, the idea could be pushed through. For this purpose he wanted to keep off from Congress. But events when he arrived at Madras dragged him into Congress politics.

On reaching Madras he presented resolutions on Independence, War Danger, co-operation with the League against Imperialism, etc. They were made into official Working Committee Resolutions and were passed in the open session. Perhaps the implications of the resolutions were not comprehended by many as they were all preoccupied



with local politics. There was, for instance, the proposed visit of the Simon Commission. A resolution condemning it and appealing for its boycott was considered and it was also decided to convene an All-Parties Conference in order to draw up a constitution for India. Jawaharlal was again induced to take up the secretaryship of the Congress for personal considerations. Dr. M. A. Ansari was the President for the year and he was an old and dear friend. Another thing which influenced him was the fact that he should see his resolutions through.

In 1928 the political atmosphere was charged with alert and activity. The trade unions were becoming stronger and more representative. Strikes were frequent, and class consciousness was developing among workers. Then there was the awakening of the peasantry. Large gatherings of protesting tenants became common. The conflict between the peasantry and the Government in Gujrat over the increase of revenue which gave birth to the famous Bardoli Satyagraha under the leadership of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel resulting in the failure to the Government produced a feeling of hope and strength among the peasants. The growing youth movement was noticeable everywhere. Youth leagues were being established and youth conferences were being held and they began to discuss the social and economic problems.

The boycott of the Simon Commission was remarkably successful. The moderate groups co-operated with the Congress. Wherever the Commission went it was greeted with thunderous shouts of "Simon go back" and huge demonstrations with black flags were staged all over the land. The All-Parties Conference was held and the main principles of the constitution were settled but a difficulty arose out of the communal question. A small committee was appointed and it came to be known as Nehru Committee and their report Nehru report because Pandit Motilal Nehru was the chairman. The anti-Simon Commission demonstration at Lahore was headed by Lala Lajpat Rai who was assaulted and beaten on his chest by the police. He was seriously injured which hastened his death a few

weeks later. The whole of India was shocked, and a dull anger spread all over the country, especially in north India where Bhagat Singh came out of his obscurity and gained immense popularity by his act of terrorism.

Jawaharlal was not spared from the countrywide lathi charges that were going on then, or rather he courted it. He went into the thick of the fight and had a strange and exciting but a new experience. The assault on Lala Lajpat Rai had increased the vigour of the demonstrations wherever it went subsequently. Lucknow made elaborate preparations. Though processions had been prohibited, small groups of sixteen were arranged and Jawaharlal was at the head of one group. He writes of his ordeal: "My group had gone perhaps about two hundred yards, the road was a deserted one, when we heard the clatter of horses' hoofs behind us. We looked back to find a bunch of mounted police, probably two or three dozen in number, bearing down upon us at a rapid pace. They were soon right upon us, and the impact of the horses broke up our little column of sixteen. The mounted policemen then started belabouring our volunteers with huge batons or truncheons and, instinctively, the volunteers sought refuge on the side-walks, and some even entered the petty shops. They were pursued and beaten down. My own instinct had urged me to seek safety when I saw the horses charging down upon us; it was a discouraging sight. But then, I suppose, some other instinct held me to my place and I survived the first charge, which had been checked by the volunteers behind me. Suddenly I found myself alone in the middle of the road; a few yards away from me, in various directions, were the policemen, beating down our volunteers. Automatically, I began moving slowly to the side of the road to be less conspicuous, but again I stopped and had a little argument with myself, and decided that it would be unbecoming for me to move away. All this was a matter of a few seconds only, but I have the clearest recollections of that conflict within me and the decision, prompted by my pride, I suppose, which could not tolerate the idea of my behaving like a coward. Yet the line between cowardice

and courage was a thin one, and I might well have been on the other side. Hardly had I so decided, when I looked round to find that a mounted policeman was trotting up to me, brandishing his long baton. I told him to go ahead, and turned my head away—again an instinctive effort to save the head and face. He gave me two resounding blows on the back. I felt stunned, and my body quivered all over but, to my surprise and satisfaction, I found that I was still standing." This was only a foretaste of what was yet to come. The next day—the day of Simon Commission's arrival—the lathi charges were severer and more staggering. He describes: "And then began a beating of us, and battering with *lathis* and long batons both by the mounted and the foot police. It was a tremendous hammering, and the clearness of vision that I had had the evening before left me. All I knew was that I had to stay where I was, and must not yield or go back. I felt half blinded with the blows, and sometimes a dull anger seized me and a desire to hit out, I thought how easy it would be to pull down the police officer in front of me from his horse and to mount up myself, but long training and discipline held and I did not raise a hand, except to protect my face from a blow.....More blows came and then I was lifted off my feet.....I emerged with a somewhat greater conceit of my physical condition and powers of endurance. But the memory that endures with me, far more than that of the beating itself, is that of many of the faces of those policemen, and especially of the officers, who were attacking us.....And those faces, full of hate and blood-lust, almost mad, with no trace of sympathy or touch of humanity! Probably the faces on our side just then were equally hateful to look at, and the fact that we were mostly passive did not fill our minds and hearts with love for our opponents, or add to the beauty of our countenances. And yet, we had no grievance against each other; no quarrel that was personal, no ill-will. We happened to represent, for the time being, strange and powerful forces which held us in thrall and cast us hither and thither, and, subtly gripping our minds and hearts, roused our desires and passions and made us their blind

tools. Blindly we struggled, not knowing what we struggled for and whither we went. The excitement of action held us ; but, as it passed, immediately the question arose ; To what end was all this ? To what end ? ” There is no malice, no bitterness in his words. It is amazing how impassionately and detachedly and how frankly he reviews the situation in which he was almost the central figure and for that very reason alone he must have been made to suffer most.

1928 was a busy year for Jawaharlal. As General Secretary of the Congress he had to look after and strengthen the Congress organisation. Because of his personal interest in socialism he had to take special pains to direct people's attention to it. And then there was his Independence resolution which he had to consolidate if a breakdown were to be avoided. For all these reasons he travelled a great deal and addressed a good number of important gatherings. He presided over four provincial conferences, in the Punjab, in Malabar, in Delhi and in U. P., and Youth Leagues and Students' Conferences in Bengal and Bombay. He also addressed industrial workers and occasionally visited rural areas. As a socialist worker his speeches were on political independence and social freedom. 1928 session of the Congress was held at Calcutta and Pandit Motilal Nehru presided over it. He was quite anxious about his Report and he wanted to push it through the Congress. But there were difficulties and differences. After many negotiations, compromises and breakdowns the Report was at last accepted—on condition that if the British Government did not agree to that constitution within a year the Congress would revert to Independence. Jawaharlal opposed the resolution and yet he was elected General Secretary. He writes : “ I had opposed the Resolution in the open Congress, though I did so half-heartedly. And yet I was again elected General Secretary ! Whatever happened I managed to stick on to the secretaryship, and in the Congress sphere I seemed to act the part of the famous Vicar of Bray. Whatever president sat on the Congress throne, still I was Secretary in charge of the organisation.”

The All-India Trade Union Congress met at Jharia a few days before the Calcutta Congress. Jawaharlal attended and participated in it for the first few days and went to Calcutta where he heard that he had been elected president for the year. The years 1928-29 were full of labour disputes and general strikes. The industrial unrest was much in evidence and the conditions of labour were deteriorating. World depression was coming to its own and revolutionary activities were moving underground. At this stage the government made a compromising gesture which culminated later in the Round Table Conference.

## CHAPTER VII, PRESIDENTSHIP.

Jawaharlal was elected President of the 1929 Lahore Session of the Indian National Congress. It was a great honour and there was a great responsibility. He deserved something greater, but India had nothing better to give than this. So there it ended. By service and sacrifice he had come to the foremost rank. For daring and determination there was no rival. He had plenty of enthusiasm and influence which nobody could deny. His character and quality had always been above the ideal. Then how did it come about that no one had thought of his name before Mahatma Gandhi mentioned it? His age was one factor, the same trouble as at Cambridge. And another must have been that the big uncles who constituted the provincial committees were his father's friends and to them young Jawaharlal was always a son or a nephew and according to the Indian point of view he could never grow before them. And therefore he had to be brought up by the Mahatma who saw in him what others had missed.

What was his response to such an honour? He describes his feelings: "I have seldom felt quite so annoyed and humiliated as I did at that election. It was not that I was not sensible of the honour, for it was a great honour, and I would have rejoiced if I had been elected in the

ordinary way. But I did not come to it by the main entrance or even a side entrance ; I appeared suddenly by a trap-door and bewildered the audience into acceptance. They put a brave face on it, and, like a necessary pill, swallowed me. My pride was hurt, and almost I felt like handing back the honour. Fortunately I restrained myself from making an exhibition of myself, and stole away with a heavy heart." When he was handcuffed he enjoyed the experience, when he was lathi-charged he was exhilarated and now when he was honoured he felt annoyed and humiliated. On every occasion considering the circumstances his feelings are natural and in each case his explanation is true and correct and yet, how complicated and confounded it looks. Honour is a dishonour and vice versa.

As regards the election business it is purely an uncle versus nephew affair and it is just in keeping with the Indian social sphere. Jawaharlal could not have known it as he was in England at that precious stage of his life. There is one instance which is almost parallel to the one in hand. When he was a child he used to peep through the curtain, without being seen for fear of being caught, trying to make out what his father and his friends said to each other. Well, the same is the case here. With a father, he grew ; with an uncle, he would not have ; and with a great uncle, never. Never would he have grown out of his childhood. As for the main entrance, let it be in a public place or in a private house, it is exclusively meant for uncles and aunts, the side entrance for servants, back-door for poachers and trap-door for nephews and nieces. That is the ordinary way for them. Jawaharlal need not have worried. Then there is 'embarrassment' and 'acceptance'. In the presence or at the approach of a nephew there is no feeling more apt than that of embarrassment. Uncle would question himself : 'Has he come for my life, or money or my daughter ?' The first two we can easily understand. They are perplexing for an uncle. Some of you might ask 'what is embarrassing in it if a nephew were to ask for his uncle's daughter ?' It is invariably found that he is not a worthwhile candidate, an uncle knows

it. And a nephew has got an age-old habit that whatever he sees his uncle for he would not turn back unless he gets it of which the uncle is well aware. Hence come the inevitable 'acceptance' and 'swallowing the necessary pill,' Jawaharlal was elected by our great uncles according to the centuries-old time-table. But there was something unique in his election—the father handing over the presidential throne to his son.

Mahatma Gandhi wrote on the occasion of his election :  
“It was a great and a wise step that the A. I. C. C. took at Lucknow.....in electing Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as the Congress helmsman for the coming year.....Some fear in this transference of power from the old to the young, the doom of the Congress. I do not.....He is pure as the crystal, he is truthful beyond suspicion. They (the youth) may take the election of Jawaharlal Nehru as a tribute to their service.....This appointment of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as the Captain is a proof of the trust the nation reposes in its youth.”

Jawaharlal was given a splendid reception at Lahore. The happiest man in a crowd of thousands was his father who was witnessing the spectacle with joy and pride. During his presidential address he reviewed the political situation in India, stressed the need for socialism, outlined a programme of action and concluded with the following words : “We have now an open conspiracy to free this country from foreign rule, and you comrades, and all our countrymen and countrywomen are invited to join it. But the rewards that are in store for you are suffering and prison and it may be death. But you shall also have the satisfaction that you have done your little bit for India, the ancient, but ever young, and have helped a little in the liberation of humanity from its present bondage.”

He attained immense popularity among all classes of people. He was a hero to the youth of India and the symbol of their new resolve for freedom. He tries to analyse the causes for his popularity : “Not because of

intellectual attainments, for they were not extraordinary, and, in any event, they do not make for popularity. Not because of so-called sacrifices, for it is patent that hundreds and thousands in our own day in India have suffered infinitely more, even to the point of the last sacrifice. My reputation as a hero is entirely a bogus one, and I do not feel at all heroic, and generally the heroic attitude or the dramatic pose in life strikes me as silly. As for romance, I should say that I am the least romantic of individuals. It is true that I have some physical and mental courage, but the background of that is probably pride : personal, group, and national, and a reluctance to be coerced into anything."

Crowds, public functions, arguments, etc. touched Jawaharlal on the surface only, but his real conflict was within, a conflict of ideas, desires and loyalties, of subconscious depths struggling with outer circumstances, of an inner hunger dissatisfied. "I became a battleground; where various forces struggled for mastery. I sought an escape from this ; I tried to find harmony and equilibrium, and in this attempt I rushed into action. That gave me some peace ; outer conflict relieved the strain of the inner struggle."

The Lahore Congress passed the Independence resolution at midnight on 31st December 1929. January 26 was fixed as Independence Day. That day the pledge of independence was taken peacefully and solemnly. The Civil Disobedience approached and electrified the atmosphere, Salt suddenly became a mysterious word, a word of power. The salt tax was to be attacked and the salt laws were to be broken. Another development was Gandhiji's announcement of his 'Eleven Points', his correspondence with the Viceroy and the beginning of the Dandi Salt March from Sabarmati Ashram. The 6th of April was the first day of the National Week and on that day Gandhiji began the breach of the salt laws at Dandi beach. Jawaharlal was arrested on 14th April while entraining to go to Raipur to attend a conference and on the same day he was tried in prison and sentenced to six



months' imprisonment under the Salt Act. On 5th May Gandhiji was arrested and then came the arrest of Pandit Motilal on 30th June. On 8th September Pandit Motilal was discharged and on 11th October Jawaharlal was released and rearrested on 19th. He was sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment and five months more in default of fines. This was his fifth term. Jawaharlal and Gandhiji were discharged on 26th January 1931, the former due to his father's illness. Pandit Motilal died on 6th February. Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed on 4th March 1931. Gandhiji left for England to attend the Round Table Conference and Jawaharlal was interned within the Allahabad Municipality. Gandhiji was coming back. Jawaharlal left for Bombay but was arrested at a wayside station. On 4th January 1932 he was awarded two years' imprisonment. Owing to his mother's illness he was released on 30th August 1933. After a while he went to Calcutta and then to Bihar where he did earthquake relief work. On return to Allahabad he was arrested and sentenced to two years' imprisonment on 16th February 1934. He was released before his due time on 14th September 1935 on account of his wife's critical condition. She was undergoing treatment in Germany. Kamala Nehru's death.

Jawaharlal returned from Europe in 1936 and presided over the Lucknow Session of the Congress in April and Faizpur Congress in December. He was again arrested on 31st October 1940 and sentenced to four years. He was released in December 1941. Then came Sir Stafford Cripps with the British proposals. Jawaharlal took a prominent part in the discussions on behalf of the Congress but the negotiations ultimately failed. The A. I. C. C. met at Bombay on 8th August 1942 and passed Mahatmaji's "Quit India" Resolution and next morning Jawaharlal, Mahatma Gandhi and other prominent leaders were arrested under the Defence of India Rules. Jawaharlal is still in prison. This is his ninth visit to British Jails. He is now fifty-five and his birthday was celebrated all over India on 14th November and numerous messages of greetings were received from India as well as from abroad.

On the occasion of his birthday Mr. K. Rama Rao, Editor of the *National Herald* (Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's paper) wrote the following article in the *Hindustan Times* under the title "The Human Side of Jawaharlal Nehru" :  
"I must first explain and apologise. In the editorial columns of the *National Herald*, we were under instructions not to refer to Jawaharlal Nehru as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. It was because he was so deeply and intimately associated with the paper, and that mental habit has stuck on to me.

"To-day he is celebrating his fifty-fifth birthday in a British Jail, where his imprisonment is running into the third year. Unlike Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru has a keen personal appreciation of days and dates. Whenever the birthday of a niece or a nephew, a friend or a colleague falls due, he writes or sends a telegram. It is an English habit, you may say, but it sweetens life to do so.

"Jawaharlal Nehru would not like to be reminded that he is entering on his fifty-fifth year. He would prefer to continue to be a Youth Leader. The weight of a grand-fatherhood is not going to bend him down. The Nehrus dislike to be interrogated about their health. They make it their business to be healthy.

"If to be great is to be misunderstood, Jawaharlal is really great. I mean, too, in the smaller things of life. He does by no means command a divine temper, and he has left a few scars all over India. But, perhaps, his victims received the outbursts of his temper on the whole in good humour. When Voltaire slapped an importunate publisher of books and the man began to protest, his Secretary walked up to him to intervene and told the publisher that he should regard it as a great privilege that he had been slapped by the greatest man of Europe then alive.

"Stories of his ebullitions and outbursts of can be multiplied. One day he was to meet a huge crowd in a village in that hottest of hot districts, Guntur, in Andhra. In order to protect him against heat, a small covering made up of palm-leaf leaves had been put up just above him.

came, looked around and saw the crowd baking in the heat. Immediately he jumped up, threw the covering down, and shouted that he had not gone so "soft" as not to be able to stand the heat. And he went on speaking for an hour or more in that inferno. When he tours the countryside of the U. P., he covers hundreds of miles in a single day, and he speaks at dozens of meetings. He is never tired. He hates the presence of police making *bandobust* at his meetings. And when he knows that they are taking down notes of his speeches, he speaks at his Congress best in order to spite them.

"Regularity in respect of keeping appointments and engagements is not a very strong point with us. Jawaharlal Nehru is incapable of being anything but regular. It is part of his daily efficiency drive, which he instils into the minds of his fellow-workers. He answers letters scrupulously. If he promises to address a meeting at midnight in winter, he will be there on the stroke of the clock. If he undertakes to turn in an anonymous editorial for the paper, the editor may feel assured that he can take the day off, for the article would surely come in at the promised time. Not many editors can say the same thing about their friends and customers.

"Jawaharlal Nehru's sense of the use of time is very strict. The only slavery he acknowledges is slavery of discipline. It is, I take it, a part of his rationalist outlook. I know instances of his refusal to meet crowds flocking at railway stations to receive him, unless they are properly lined up in rows. He would not address a public meeting, unless it has settled down to pin-drop silence, and he would jump from place to place till all are properly seated, and have got into the mood to listen.

"Jawaharlal Nehru lacks neither moral nor physical courage. In moral courage, if he has a rival or a superior, it can only be Mahatma Gandhi. In physical courage he is of the lion brand. In that famous election of 1937, when the whole cohorts of the Rajah of Bobbili turned out on elephant-back to attack Giri's battalion of buffalo-mounted

Congressmen, a fight royal seemed to be certain. Suddenly Jawaharlal jumped into the fray and was going to punch the first elephant and the first man he got near to. Even the mighty men of Bobbili were startled at the courage of a man who did not have even a *danda* in his hand. The police who had more to fear from the Chief Minister of Madras who was Giri's rival candidate than the constantly jail-going Pandit intervened, saying that they could tolerate any excesses that pleased the Bobbili men to commit, but one blow on Jawaharlal Nehru and rifles would get going at the Rajah's men. History has not recorded a greater victory for buffalos over elephants.

"Apparently stand-offish to the extent of being considered a snob, Jawaharlal Nehru is full of the milk of human kindness. To his fellow-workers in the Congress, he is not only the chief but also the Big Brother. A good deal of his time is spent in composing their quarrels and giving them wholesome advice on team work. He employs his time constantly in looking into the details of their lives, and the big and small deeds of kindness and mercy he does are innumerable. While on active service, he makes no difference between colonel and corporal. If a fellow-worker can ride a horse in a procession, he would rather give it to him than keep it to himself. He looks after the commissariat with the keenness of a quartermaster-general. If a Congress volunteer is ill, he goes to his house and arranges for his treatment. His kindness to animals is almost proverbial. He has a trained equestrian's skill in looking after that noble animal.

"One thing which he hates more than any other, is the tremendous waste at our lunches and dinners. You have only to compare the hall after an Indian dinner is over, with a hall after an English dinner and you will realise our criminal tendencies in this matter. We waste more than we eat. I am all out for permanent rationing in this country.

"What is Jawaharlal's religion? One day an English editor with whom I was working, spoke to me somewhat

like this. "You say Jawaharlal Nehru is a secularist and an atheist. But read his books. How often he makes you think that he is a great believer!" The truth is the religion of Jawaharlal, is the religion of a scientist, who is struck by awe and wonder at the unity and uniformity of Nature. It is the religion of a poet, who is impressed by the grandeur of the mountain, the calmness of the desert, the loveliness of the forest, the silence of the starry deep. The Ultimate One of the Sankhya conception or the Personal Deity of the Bhakti-Margi is not for him. Organised religion, he has no use for. He says, "it invariably becomes a vested interest and thus inevitably a reactionary force opposing change and progress." He agrees with Romain Rolland that "Scepticism itself, when it proceeds from vigorous natures true to the core, when it is an expression of strength and not of weakness, joins in the march of the Grand Army of the religious Soul."

"One of the few things for which we can be a little grateful to the British Government is that, by periodically imprisoning our political leaders, it not only gives them much-needed rest-cures but also gives them an opportunity to devote time to things of the spirit. Friends have been pointing out that Jawaharlal is a much better Hindu to-day than he ever was before. It is because, thanks to the time he has been doing in jail, and also thanks to the guidance of his late brother-in-law, Mr. R. S. Pandit, deep as a scholar and pugnacious as a Brahmin, he has found time to study the Hindu scriptures. Strip them of their accretions, you find in them the true religion after which the human soul has been in incessant quest throughout the ages. It is the Religion of Humanism, and Jawaharlal's is essentially that."

Mr. Fenner Brockway, Secretary of the Independent Labour Party, London sent the following birthday message when it was being celebrated in London: "I take the view that the greatest changes in history are not due to individual leaders but due to deeper social forces. Nevertheless, leadership is important and sometimes decisive."

India is fortunate in having two of the world's greatest men as its leaders. I mean of course Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Nehru. I welcome the opportunity of sending Mr. Nehru a message on his 55th birthday. That he should be in prison is sufficient indictment of the British rule. This wrong is the more intolerable by the fact that in the stature of his ability and personality, he is a giant compared with the little statesmen who keep him in gaol. Mr. Amery is a pigmy not only physically but mentally and spiritually compared with him. There is no man in the British Cabinet who has knowledge of mankind through the ages and in the present period such as Mr. Jawaharlal possesses. There is no man who has so deeply studied all social and political systems—of Russia, Britain, America, Germany—as Mr. Jawaharlal has done. There is no man who has his bold constructive vision. There is no man who has his strength of character and resolution to face all sacrifices for his ideals. India has reason to be proud of Mr. Jawaharlal, Britain has reason to be ashamed of the statesmen who gaoled him. Perhaps the last word to be said in condemnation of Imperialism is that it gives small men power to imprison the great."

The following message was received from Professor Laski, foremost socialist thinker and economist ; " I should like, through you, to send my warm good wishes to Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru on his 55th birthday. I know no figure in contemporary politics of greater nobility than he, and no greater proof of the failure of the British System in India than that he should be in jail instead of being the Prime Minister of Free India. I hope earnestly that I should see this aim fulfilled in a brief time."

Professor Edward Thompson in his message says ; " It is very hard to know what to say about my dear friend Mr. Jawaharlal. As my message I send you, Mr. Jawaharlal, the assurance given to the Hebrew Prophet, 'Oh man, greatly beloved, fear not ; peace be unto thee ; be strong ; yes, be strong, Go thou thy way till the end of thy days,'"

Lord Strabolgi sends his best wishes to Mr. Nehru whom he characterises as a " valiant fighter for India's

freedom." "I believe," says Lord Strabolgi, "the time is overdue for the unconditional release of Mr. Nehru and other Congress leaders."

Mr. G. Strauss, M. P., a close associate of Sir Stafford Cripps sent the following message; "I would like to convey my warmest congratulations to Pandit Nehru on his fifty-fifth birthday. I had the privilege of meeting him several times in London when I learnt to appreciate his great integrity and outstanding ability. I fervently hope that the present distressing situation will soon be remedied and that Pandit Nehru will be able to take his rightful place in the leadership of Indian and world affairs."







